



Placatus del

J. Rembrandt

From the Picture in the Tomb of St. Peter

Published by the Museum of the City of London

LIFE
OF
TORQUATO TASSO;
WITH
AN HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF
HIS WRITINGS,
BY
JOHN BLACK.
IN TWO VOLUMES:—VOL. FIRST.



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PREFACE.

AN union of three circumstances seems necessary to fit a subject, in a high degree, for the pen of the biographer : The person of whom he writes must have been eminent ; his life must have been various, and eventful ; and the documents which remain of it must be numerous and accurate.

All these circumstances are to be found, in a singular degree, in the subject that I have chosen. There are, indeed, few men in human story, whose names awaken curiosity like that of Tasso, or whose lives are better fitted to ex-

cite or reward biographical research. By all who are capable of judging, he is considered as, if not the greatest, at least as one of the greatest of poets; and the writings which he has bequeathed to posterity will probably be preserved as long as monuments of genius shall be venerated by mankind.

It will be remarked, likewise, that Tasso was not only eminent, but of a class of eminence peculiarly calculated to gain the attention and interest of his species. The fame of the man of science is, in general, destined to live only in the history of his science, and in the writings of his successors. His own productions soon become imperfect and obsolete; useful only as monuments of the progress of the human mind, or as trophies of her successive conquests over nature. The duration, indeed, of writings addressed to the understanding is limited, in proportion to the quickness of discovery, since every valuable scientific work (according to the remark of Bacon,) like the rod of Aaron, devours its rivals. On the contrary, whatever addresses

itself to the fancy or the heart, while it interests a more numerous class of mankind, is more permanent in its duration, since the qualities on which that permanence is founded, instead of being strengthened, are generally enfeebled in the progress of society. Of such writers, the poet is the most eminent: his fame (if he is illustrious,) lives in *his own* productions, and, instead of being darkened or limited, often spreads and grows brighter by the length of days. Tasso belongs to the highest class of such poets. His greatest work is of the epic kind, a species of writing which, from the few perfect specimens of it that have been given to the world, has been thought to require the most vigorous display of the highest powers of the human mind. It is a field of poetry, too, in which the greatness of the champions who have already exercised themselves, is sufficient to deter all future adventurers, and whence the trophies to be won seem already to have been borne away.

In fact, whether we consider the nature of the subjects for the heroic muse, or that pro-

gressive diffusion of knowledge which is daily encroaching upon the empire of imagination, and rendering those magical wonders, which were once felt as real, mere objects for the contemplation of taste, it may be concluded, and perhaps hoped, that the last interesting epic poem has been given to the world. Another youthful bard may be placed, like Tasso, in a situation calculated to nourish sensibility to glory; and enjoy the most favourable opportunities of consulting books, nature, and society. Like him, he may possess the advantage of being born in a family where his literary emulation is excited; in a country where the most beautiful of modern languages is spoken; and where the scenery, both by what it presents, and by what it recalls, is fitted most powerfully to awaken and enrich the imagination. He may possess the same genius as the author of the *Jerusalem*, and yet must despair of rivalling his poetical glory. It is well known that in the sciences, as in the political order, things must have reached a certain maturity, and genius

must be born at a fortunate period, in order to produce a revolution, or to gain its highest flight. This is likewise true, to a certain degree, in literature ; and the *Jerusalem Delivered* may be considered, in some measure, as the birth of time, as well as of exalted mental energies. Its author lived at a period of society abounding with picturesque pageantry—at that happy dawn, when Fancy has not lost her empire, and when the forms that glitter in the orient ray have not yet been dispersed by the increasing light of reason. He possessed, or availed himself of advantages of a peculiar nature. When Tasso began to write,* the public seems to have been satiated both with the trite thoughts, and faded pictures of the imitators of the ancients, and with the striking, but confused and grotesque delineations of the romantic writers. Combining the advantages, while he shunned the defects of either, this poet united the Gothic splendour and variety, with the classical graces of order and regularity. He adorned a most happy subject with the most sublime and pathetic beauties ; with the most vi-

vid delineations of character ; with the most delightful combination of events ; with the noblest style, and the most brilliant images. Love, heroism, and enchantment, whatever fascinates the imagination, kindles the soul, or soothes the heart, contribute to the embellishment of his wonderful poem ; and no other production of the human mind is calculated to awaken more powerfully the sweetest and most generous sympathies of our nature. Tasso, in short, has raised himself to the number of those few fortunate writers, whose works are necessary in the libraries of the learned and elegant in every nation, who have become, as it were, citizens of the world, and who excite the interest, and flatter the pride, not merely of a single people, but of civilized man.

II. Nor, unfortunately for this illustrious poet, was his life deficient in those circumstances which I have mentioned, in the second place, as essential to an interesting biographical production, since it was, in a very high degree, various and eventful. The story of Tasso has all the interest which genius, virtue, and misery can inspire, and

no other destiny presents so strongly a contrast of humiliation and of glory, of the strength of the human mind, and of its weakness. The habits of those who have distinguished themselves by their literary talents, have, in very modern times, been so uniform and retired, that it has been established as a kind of adage, that the history of their writings is the history of their lives. It was different at a period when the author was to seek his reward, not from the favour of the public, but from the caprice of some patron ; when, to the exertions of genius, he was forced to unite the intrigues of a courtier ; when his rivals were not, as now, scattered in society, and only remotely, and in a small degree, injured by his reputation, but when they lived in the same petty court, and found the success of an opponent a continual sting to their envy, or barrier to their interests. * If, in such a situation, we place a man with a most powerful imagination, and with a warm and feeling heart ; if we con-

* Suard, *Mélanges*, &c. tom. V. p. 1.

sider him as possessed of that morbid sensibility, which often accompanies genius for the arts, and is increased by their exercise ; if born, and educated amidst misfortunes, the violent sensibility and melancholy of such a person has been increased by the perpetual contrast between a noble birth and a needy condition ; between the dependence of a courtier to a petty prince, and the pride of an exalted soul ; if we add to this an astonishing activity of genius, a devouring thirst, and impatience for renown, irritated at once by the obstacles which nature opposes to all men, by the glory which has been conferred on a late predecessor in the same career, and by the barriers which envy and hatred are placing in his way ; if we consider all these circumstances, we shall perceive that such a life may have been full of bitterness, and fertile in events. Such was the life of Tasso, and his story is not less interesting on account of his eminence^e as a poet, than by the singular state of his mind, and unhappiness of his destiny.

Though Nature gave him, and though Science taught,
The fire of fancy, and the reach of thought ;
Severely doom'd to penury's extreme,
He pass'd in maddening pain, life's feverish gleam ;
While rays of genius only serv'd to show
The thickening horror, and exalt his woe. *

It would appear, therefore, that no man ever afforded a fitter subject for a minute biographical detail than Tasso, since, whether we consider him in a literary view as a distinguished poet, or in a historical, as the sport of nature and of fortune, or in a moral, as the victim of passions too much exalted, we are presented with results in a high degree curious and affecting. Nor is it merely on account of his eminence as a writer, or his vicissitudes as a man, that the life of Tasso derives its interest. Like the innocence of Mary in Scotland, the writer of the letters of Junius in England, and the iron mask in France, the misfortunes of the author of the *Jerusalem Delivered* are considered in some

measure as the national secret of his country. The biographer of Tasso has thus the advantage of being presented with a difficult and piquant problem to resolve; while his readers have the satisfaction of obtaining, if he is successful, an explanation of the enigma which so much learned labour has been exerted to resolve, or, what many of them will value more, an opportunity of exerting their own ingenuity in detecting the feebleness of his solutions, if they are weak.

III. With regard to the materials for a biographical account of Tasso, these are in a very high degree abundant and authentic. Soon after the death of the poet, his life was written at considerable length by John Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa. This nobleman had been an intimate friend of Tasso, was in possession of a number of his manuscripts, and witness to many of the circumstances which he relates. The production of Manso is the fountain to which the writers of the life of Tasso in every nation have had recourse, and (previous to a treatise immediately to be mentioned) the numerous

eulogies and notices of this great poet are only extracts from, and abridgements of, that work.*

During the greater part of last century, literary history was a most fashionable study in Italy; and whatever documents related to this subject were examined by many learned Italians with a labour, an accuracy, and minuteness, of which

* Manso's *Life of Tasso* was compiled about the year 1600, at the request of Cardinal Cynthio Aldobrandino, but was not published till 1621, *In Venezia per Evangelista Deuchino*, in 12°. It was reprinted by the same publisher in 1624, and again, with some additions by Francesco Cavalli, *in Roma*, 1634, in 12°.

There is some confusion at the beginning of this *Life*, from the circumstance of the publisher, Deuchino, affecting to be the author, and only acknowledging to have been indulged with the collections made by the marquis for a similar undertaking. [See Walker's *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*. Appendix. No. V.] Of the authenticity of the work, however, and of its composition by Manso, there never was any general suspicion, nor is the smallest doubt, at present, entertained in Italy. Milton pays a direct compliment to the marquis, and an implied one to Tasso, of equality with Homer, in the following lines of his beautiful poem *Mansus*, where he thus praises the biographical production of that nobleman:

Describis vitam, moresque, et dona Minervae,
Æmulus illius, Mycalen qui natus ad altam,
Rettulit Æolii vitam facundus Homeri.

there has been as yet scarcely an instance in other nations. Several causes concurred in rendering this study fashionable in that country. When a people, at one period of their history, have arisen to a height from which they afterwards descend, they are fond of retracing and renewing the memory of the glory of their ancestors. In other countries the mind may be principally occupied with the present or with the future, but in Italy every thing recalls the past ; and the study of antiquity, repulsive elsewhere by retracing only brutal violence, and barbarous prejudices, is there a source of proud or of sweetly melancholy emotions. Besides, in Italy, those political studies which, during a great part of last century, occupied the rest of Europe, were cramped by the nature of its governments, so that, abounding with men of talents and research, there was a superfluity of mind, which was turned to the pursuit of literary history. Add to this, that Italy, like Greece, abounded with small states, each of them desirous of vindicating to its own members the fame of genius ; and,

where the circumstances of the life of an author were obscure, boasting of him as a citizen, if it had the least pretence, on which to found its claim. Owing to this jealousy, letters and other documents have been preserved in the public libraries, in different cities of Italy, many of them relating to persons, whose very names in other countries would, in the course of a few years, have been consigned to oblivion.

Of the literary historians of Italy, during the last century, one of the most praiseworthy, was the Abbe Pier-Antonio Scassì. This writer was born of a respectable family at Bergamo in Lombardy, on the seventeenth of February, 1721. He was educated in his native city, and at Milan; and gave very early proofs of the future direction of his talents. In 1742, he published his *Opinion concerning the country of Bernardo, and of Torquato Tasso*, * a tract in which he vindica-

* *Parere intorno alla patria di Bernardo Tasso, e Torquato suo figliuolo.* The second edition of this short treatise is prefixed to the third volume of the *Lettere di B. Tasso*; Ed. Comino.

ted, to the district of Bergamo, the honour of being the native country of these poets, which had been denied by Seghezzi, author of a very elegant biographical account of Bernardo. The success of the young author was so compleat, that we are informed by Calogiera, that Seghezzi confessed his opponent was in the right, and that he should treat the subject differently, were he again to write on it. *

In the succeeding years, Serassi published editions of several writers of the golden age of Italian literature, with notices of their lives prefixed; and, for a considerable period, scarcely a new edition of any former Italian author was published, without a biographical memoir from his pen. All these bespeak minute diligence, and an attention to those accurate sources of information, without which a *Life* is in no respect more useful, or more respectable, than a romance.

Having thus acquired an enlarged and minute

* *Raccolta d'Opuscoli Scientifici, e Filologici*, tom. 31. Pref.

acquaintance with the literary history of his country, Serassi, anxious to do honour to his native district, and elated, perhaps, with his youthful success in the contest concerning Tasso, formed the plan of writing a biographical account of this poet, and spent a considerable portion of a long and valuable life in collecting and arranging materials for that purpose. From a laborious investigation by this author, it appeared that Manso, who had been acquainted with Tasso only in the latter part of his life, advances a number of circumstances relative to the more early, and more interesting portion of it, which are exaggerated, ill founded, and improbable. Besides, he omits, or passes slightly over, many most important incidents ; is almost silent with regard to the controversies which arose on the subject of the *Jerusalem Delivered* ; and is extremely inaccurate with respect to dates. The work of Manso, indeed, contains many valuable anecdotes, but these principally relate to the time that Tasso spent at Naples during the lat-

ter years of his life, when he lived in habits of great intimacy with his biographer.

In the year 1785, Serassi published at Rome (whither he had been invited, in 1754, by Cardinal Furietti, his townsman, and where he continued to reside) his *Vita di Torquato Tasso*, of which the biographical part, without including his list of editions, occupies 521 quarto pages.* Soon afterward, he, by desire, or command, of Pius V. employed himself in writing the life of James Mazzoni, a native of Cesena, the birth place of that pontiff. This work was also published at Rome in 1790; and in that metropolis, Serassi closed his life on the nineteenth of February, 1791, when he had just completed his sixty-ninth year. Such was the gratitude of the municipal government of his native place, for the zeal and ability which he had on all oc-

* Of this work, there has been a second edition, *Bergamo*, 1790, in two volumes, 4to. The additions made in it are exceedingly trifling, and the ornaments are fewer, and not so well executed. I possess both editions; but as the first is more correct, it is that which I shall always quote.

casions shown in promoting the literary glory of Bergamo, that, by its order, a medal was struck in his honour, with the epigraph—**PROPAGATORI PATRIAE LAUDIS.**

The style of Serassi is considered by his countrymen as very pure; and his *Life of Tasso* must secure him always a most respectable place among literary historians. His is not one of those treatises which are composed to-day from the collections of yesterday; since, in no biographical work whatever, do there exist greater marks of research and authenticity. Scarcely a fact is stated without vouchers, of which a considerable portion had remained in MS. and had never before seen the light. The work is in general clear, distinct, and methodical. Nevertheless, the production of Serassi has many and great imperfections; and, though gratitude is due to an author who has discovered so many facts, and disproved so many mistakes, still it is my opinion that more might and ought to have been done by him. He seems never to have got the proper view of his object;

there is no light and shade, no grouping, no attention to perspective in his historical picture. It would be unfair, perhaps, to object to this biographer, that his book is totally barren of moral or critical remark, since, in this respect, he only follows the common example of the prose writers of Italy. * Some persons, indeed, have expressed an opinion, that history, and perhaps also biography, should be a mere detail of facts, the inferences from which are to be left to the reflection of the reader. The true way to suggest reflections to the reader is, as D'Alembert remarks, to set him the example ; and when connected with the subject, when short and natural, they seem to be the soul and substance of

* “ La plupart de vos écrivains en prose, aujourd'hui, ont un langage si déclamatoire, si diffus, si abondant en superlatifs, qu'on dirait qu'ils écrivent tous de commande, avec des phrases reçues, et pour une nature de convention ; ils semblent ne pas se douter qu'écrire c'est exprimer son caractère, et sa pensée. Le style littéraire est pour eux un tissu artificiel, une mosaïque rapportée, je ne sais quoi d'étranger, enfin, à leur âme, qui se fait avec la plume, comme un ouvrage mécanique avec les doigts.”

Corinne, tom. I. p. 323.

this species of writing. If a historian be partial, this is to be dreaded, not in the reflections that he makes, but in his statement of facts; while, on the other hand, the remarks which occur to him may occasionally be valuable, as suggested immediately by a kind of experience, and by a nearer and more intimate view of events, than when engaged in abstract philosophical enquiry. It seems not to be enough for the biographer to prove, by the most accurate documents, that his hero was this year in Rome, and the next in Padua; he ought to observe, or endeavour to observe, the circumstances which favoured the developement of the mental faculties in his man of genius; the connection between the character of his talents and the nature of his education; the idea which appears to have been the prevailing principle of his conduct, and how the impulse was communicated; the relation in which he stood to his predecessors and contemporaries in the same career; the causes which contributed to the success, or failure, of his productions; his prevailing moral affections; in fine, his in-

fluence upon posterity, to whose delight he has contributed, or whose progress he has prepared.

But what may be yet more strongly objected to Serassi, and which is a still greater defect in his work, is, his frequent (not misrepresentation, but) concealment of the truth. I call it concealment, since it is scarcely to be supposed that an author, whose researches on the subject of Tasso were so minute, should have been enabled to throw so little light on the most important problems of that poet's life. His country, his profession, his prejudices, his fears, and perhaps his hopes, took from Serassi that liberty of mind without which it is impossible to enunciate moral or historical truth. On these accounts he has left whatever was mysterious in the life of Tasso as mysterious as he found it. It is difficult to suppose, that he did not know the causes which led to the mental alienation of that poet; but on this subject he is obscure and confused; he mingles together the events of two different years; and, while he is extremely accurate in informing us how Tasso disposed of his baggage

when he changed, as he often did, his residence, he disguises altogether the wounds which his reason received from Envy under the mask of Religion.

Another defect of Serassi is, that he does not appreciate, but praise; and that, in many respects, his work is not so much a life as a panegyric. I do not object to this writer, that he will not allow that the author of the *Jerusalem* ever was insane, and accordingly cancels, or mutilates, many of the principal passages in which that great poet speaks of his disorders. This may be attributed to a kind concern for the sufferings of Tasso, though (if it could be supposed that Spirits of bliss can deign to bestow attention on our little occupations here,) I may call to witness the Spirit of this great poet, that no one has had a deeper sympathy than myself for his misfortunes; or would have been disposed, were the detail of his sufferings unpropitious to his glory, to have laid more gently the mantle over his sad distress. But that for which I blame Serassi is that, where neither the health nor feelings of

Tasso were concerned, he seems always to have written in some kind of fear of compromising the credit of his author, his native district, or himself; and disguises a number of circumstances which were absolutely necessary to understand the character, develop the story, and complete the portrait of this great poet.

Nevertheless, the *Life of Tasso*, by Serassi, has been infinitely useful to me, both by the materials which it supplied, and by its generally clear and methodical arrangement. I have not, indeed, derived from this writer a single physiological, critical, or moral remark, for such are not to be found in his work; but I have followed him faithfully, and have transcribed from his book, I believe, every fact concerning Tasso which it contains. In some important cases, such especially as the history of the revision of the *Jerusalem*, I have quite deserted him; I have given many letters which he had suppressed; and we often quote different passages from the same letter. Even in such cases Serassi has greatly aided the future biographer, since, where

he does not quote an epistle, he in general at least alludes to it; and, though his extracts from a letter may not be the most interesting passage which it contains, still he has done much by indicating its existence, by directing research, and especially by placing it in chronological order.

The third, and most valuable source of materials for a Life of Tasso are his own writings; and it is from a very attentive study of such part of these as relate to his biography, that I am hopeful I may claim for this work the merit of dispersing, in a considerable degree, the darkness which has enveloped the story of that poet. Owing to his early eminence as a writer, the letters of Tasso were considered as valuable by his correspondents, so that a very considerable number have been preserved, some of which relate to his poetical productions, others are the records of his feelings, or mark the events of his life. * Such of these, however, as were written

* The edition of Tasso's works to which I always refer, is that of Venice, in twelve volumes 4to. as it contains a much greater number of his letters than the Florence edition in six volumes folio. Scraasi

during Tasso's long distemper, while they are evidence of the actual conviction of his *own* mind at the periods of their dates, are by no means to be considered as proper vouchers of the conduct of *others* towards him; and the biographer of that poet has this peculiar difficulty to encounter, that (not owing to Tasso's want of integrity, but the state of his mind) he cannot give implicit credit to the testimony of the very person whose life he is narrating. I have found this a very serious difficulty; and with regard, in particular, to the conduct of the Duke of Ferrara towards the poet, the reader will find in these volumes, a fluctuation and unsteadiness of opinion, which might seem to indicate an inattentive examination of the subject, but which really proceeded

had obtained (chiefly from the library of the Sigg. Falconieri) copies of a good many unpublished letters of Tasso, which he occasionally quotes. It is much to be wished that these were given to the world in a small volume, as, from the manner in which Serassi selects his passages from the printed letters, it may be doubted whether we are in possession of every thing valuable which those still in MS. contain.

from anxiety for the truth, and the wavering of Tasso himself. With respect, however, to the sources of this poet's mental alienation, they may be considered, perhaps, as fully developed in these volumes; and if on the causes of his long imprisonment I have not been able to speak so definitely, the problem appears to be rendered no longer indeterminate, but reduced within limits which may greatly facilitate its solution.

The following work will appear, perhaps, to be too diffuse; and indeed of the author of the *Jerusalem Delivered* I have taken care to omit no circumstance which I have learned. It is, in fact, such men only who are capable of being analyzed, or worthy of being observed. "Every circumstance relating to such a man (says Condorcet, in speaking of Voltaire,) promotes the study of the human mind, with which we cannot hope to be acquainted, if we do not observe its properties, as they exist in those to whom Nature has been prodigal of her riches, and her power; if we do not seek in such minds what they possess in common with others, and in what

they are distinguished. The ordinary man receives his opinions, his passions, his character, from those about him ; he is modified by the laws, the prejudices, and customs of his country, as the plant derives every thing from the soil which feeds, and from the air which surrounds it. When we contemplate the vulgar mind, we discover the power to which we are subjected by habit, but not the secret of our strength, nor the laws of the human understanding.” *

Besides, if I might be permitted to state my own feelings, I must confess that I have ever found short lives the longest, and wholly coincide in opinion with the following sentiments of Cowper : “ Having read (says he) both Hawkins and Boswell, I now think myself almost as much a master of Johnson’s character as if I had known him personally, and cannot but regret *that our bards of other times* found no such biographers as these. They have both been

* *Vie de Voltaire*, p. 1.

ridiculed, and the wits have had their laugh; but such an history of Milton, or Shakespeare, as they have given of Johnson—Oh how desirable!”* With such opinions on the subject of biography, the author of the following work has chosen to subject himself to the risk of being prolix and tedious, rather than that of being vague and indistinct. Indeed he has considered nothing as too minute, both because in great matters men shew themselves as suits their vanity, or interest, while in the little, they retire behind the scenes, and appear as they truly are; and because circumstances, apparently trivial in an author’s life, will sometimes throw light on the obscurities of his works.

It has also been my object to be scrupulously, and, perhaps, sometimes triflingly accurate with regard to dates, since it is useless to amass a collection of minute facts, without they are methodized with the most painful attention to chro-

* Hayley, *Life*, &c., vol. III. p. 190, 8vo.

nology. In fact, the biographer, who neglects a careful adjustment of these, will be equally erroneous in his inferences, as the philosopher who generalizes from experiments which are too few in number, or made without sufficient precision. It is wonderful how many conjectures and disputes might have been saved by a little attention to dates ;* and those minute antiquarians, who have been so long ridiculed and despised by literary men, (as the philosophers of Greece looked down with scorn upon the practical observer,) are the very persons from whom they must learn, or whom they must condescend to imitate, if they would establish, upon firm principles, our yet vague and uncertain notions upon literary history.

The Life of Tasso, in the last place, seemed worthy of a long detail, not merely on account of his own eminence, but from the influence of his writings on the best of our bards. Even to

literary men, the Italian language is, in general, not, like the French, quite familiar ; and, in spite of all that has been effected, much still remains to be done, before we shall have become sufficiently acquainted with the masters of the fathers of our poetry : yet, till this be done, we shall have but a comparatively imperfect notion of the noblest productions of English literature. The subject, also, affords a biographer of Tasso an opportunity of recording the obligations of the elegant arts to a family, to which our princes are allied in blood ; and concerning which, though the rival of the Medici, and, in the eminence of the literary men whom it fostered, far their superior, little has been written in these kingdoms.

There is, besides, another point, upon which the author of the following work doubts he may be blamed by the mere literary man ; and that is, his attention to describe the causes, progress, and nature of Tasso's mental alienation. He had observed, in looking into books, on insanity, that almost every writer on the sub-

ject mentions Tasso, while all of them utterly mistake both the sources and symptoms of his disorders. It occurred to him, therefore, that it was in the power, and ought to be an object of the biographer of Tasso, to present a delineation of the peculiarities of thought and of feeling, by which the mental disorganization of that poet was preceded and accompanied. Some portion of the work accordingly may be considered as a detailed case of melancholia, by the patient himself, and detailed, perhaps, in a manner more compleat than exists in the whole archives of physiology. The humane and reflecting poet and critic will, it is hoped, pardon me, if sometimes, losing sight of that art which Tasso not merely cultivated, but promoted, I endeavour to collect materials for the beneficent labours of the mental physician: and happy shall I be if the misfortunes of the man to whom we are indebted for the most beautiful of poems, shall contribute to the rising interest for the insane.

. The selection of a subject so interesting and important, by a young and unknown author,

may seem overweening; but I will detain the reader with no apology, nor add to the charge of presumption that of hypocrisy. He who attempts a subject, whatever may be the humility of his professions, gives evidence, by that very attempt, that, in his own opinion, he is in some degree qualified for it; and if his confidence be rash, it will certainly meet its proper chastisement. This, the author of the present work may with truth affirm, that he has been deficient neither in enthusiasm for the subject, nor in that degree of labour to which it gives birth. What he can assure the reader, and what it is his interest principally to know, is, that he has been painfully scrupulous with regard to facts, and that the faults are not those of carelessness, but of perplexity. Solicitous principally about the enquiry and argument, inaccuracies of style and expression have, no doubt, occurred and been overlooked, especially in the first volume, where he was less habituated to composition. Some of the criticisms on the subject of Tasso may be disputed, and some or all of the translations,

may be thought inadequately to represent the beauties of the originals; but, gratified as he would be, if this work shall, as a literary performance, gain the suffrage of the public, it is as a work of enquiry and research upon which he is desirous to rest its claims.

As the principal materials for this production were the work of Serassi, and especially the writings of Tasso himself, I could, from the nature of the subject, be less indebted to the communications of friends than I should have been, had the materials been more dispersed. I have received, however, several proofs of benevolence from different literary men, in naming whom I satisfy at once my vanity and gratitude. Of these, I have been chiefly indebted to Lord Woodhouselee, whose active and condescending friendship has formed, and forms, one of the principal blessings of my life. The literary courtesy of Joseph Cooper Walker, Esq. has been recorded in many works; and the author of these volumes has also to thank him for those zealous exertions, which he is ever ready to make

in behalf of him, who labours in any department of literature, especially in that which his own writings have contributed to promote. To the flattering kindness of William Hayley, Esq. I am indebted, besides other proofs of his benevolence, for the two portraits of Tasso, that decorate this work, which had been sent to him from Rome, by Flaxman, who copied them in the Monastery of St Onofrio, where the poet died, and where his ashes repose. And had not the embellishment of these volumes been thus fortunately accomplished, the Life of Tasso would have been adorned by a portrait of that poet, from a painting in the possession of the biographer of Lorenzo de' Medici, to whom Tuscan, and English literature is so much indebted, and to whose labours, perhaps, it will have been chiefly owing, if ever the Italian muses shall resume their former dignity in this island.

Whatever may be the success of this work, I shall never regret having employed my labour on it. That person would have written the life of Tasso to little purpose, whose feverish thirst

of literary reputation, the frequent contemplation of that poet's fate has not assuaged, and whose chagrin at being obscure and undistinguished, it has not consoled. No more striking example has ever been afforded to the world, that happiness is not the certain attainment of intellectual, any more than of civil greatness:—that, like the violet, it is not to be found upon the mountain, where the oak combats with the storm, but diffuses its odours in the vale of life, where, satisfied with the past, and delighted with the future, unassuming Virtue pursues the noiseless tenor of her way.

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LIFE

OF

TORQUATO TASSO.

CHAPTER I.

Genealogical Account of the Family of the Tassi.—Biographical Notices of Bernardo, Father of Torquato Tasso.—His retirement to Sorrento.—Beautiful situation of that City.—Sperone Speroni.—Birth of Torquato Tasso.

THE family of Tasso is said, by Manso, and the Italian writers in general, to have been derived from that of the Torriani lords of Milan. This account, however, of its origin is fabulous, as has been proved at great length by Serassi. * The same writer informs us, that the most ancient notices we have of the Tassi, are of the twelfth century. At that time they were settled in Almenno, a pleasant territory on the river Brembo, about five miles from Bergamo. In order to

CHA 1.

* *Vita di T. Tasso*, p. 3.

CHAP. I. secure themselves during the petty incursions and wars of those ages, they, about the year 1200, took possession of Cornello, a mountain in the neighbourhood of the river Brembo, and, in process of time, became wealthy and potent lords.

Omodeo Tasso of Cornello, who lived about the year 1290, was the first inventor or revivor of regular posts; and his descendants obtained the generalship of the post offices in Italy, Flanders, Germany, and Spain. This must have been a source of great wealth, and the branches of the family who settled in those countries soon arrived at the highest dignities. In Spain, and Flanders, individuals of the family of the Tassi were ennobled, and became the founders of great families; in Germany they attained the rank of sovereign princes.

The stem of all these illustrious branches remained in Italy, and continued, as it still continues, at Bergamo. In that city was born Bernardo Tasso, (the father of Torquato,) a man who would have dignified any origin, and who found means, amidst the vicissitudes of an eventful life, to raise himself to a high degree of eminence in poetry and literature. Of the circumstances of the life of this illustrious poet, it will be proper to give some detail, as preparative to, and illustrative of, that of his son.* Bernardo Tasso was born on the

Bernardo
Tasso.

* For these notices of Bernardo Tasso, I am indebted to two biographical accounts of that poet, the first by Seghezzi, the other by Serassi. I have perused also, with much attention, his elegant epistles, the value of which, however, as historical documents, is

eleventh of November, 1493. Discovering early an inclination to learning, he was entrusted by his father to the care of one of the most excellent grammarians of Bergamo. In a short time, however, and in early youth, he was left an orphan, poor, and burdened with two sisters. One of these was afterwards married, the other entered into a convent at Bergamo, of the institute of St Benedict.

Fortunately for Bernardo, he was now protected by a near relation of his mother, the Bishop of Recanati, who not only sent him to the best masters, but took upon himself all the expenses of his education. Favoured with the protection of this prelate, the young scholar made much progress in Greek and Latin literature; and applying himself to Italian poetry, wrote verses in that language, with great sweetness, and much variety. In a beautiful sonnet, he tells us, that he was powerfully stimulated to exertion in his studies by the example of Cardinal Bembo, whose esteem and affection he had the good fortune to gain.

Bernardo, in the early part of his career, seems to have enjoyed considerable happiness, advanced daily in knowledge and reputation, and formed several friendships which were an ornament and comfort to him during life. His best friend, however, the good Bishop of Recanati, was assassinated during the night in 1520, and soon after the death of that prelate, Bernardo left his native country, probably in search of employment. About this period he became ena-

much impaired by the greater number of them wanting dates. I shall appear perhaps too diffuse on the subject of Bernardo; but, besides his high excellence as a poet, the events of his life had a peculiar influence on the destiny of Torquato.

CHAP. I. moured of Ginevra Malatesta, a lady of incomparable beauty, who has been celebrated by Ariosto, and other excellent writers.* To this lady Bernardo addressed many sonnets; sometimes, from the resemblance of names, celebrating her under the allegory of a *juniper* (*ginebro*,) as Petrarch had frequently extolled his Laura under that of a laurel; sometimes commending her, less ingeniously perhaps, but certainly more appropriately, as a beautiful woman.

Whatever impression the sonnets of Bernardo made upon the beautiful Ginevra, she married the Cavalier Degli Obizzi, whose verses probably were worse, but his situation better, than that of his rival. On this occasion Bernardo composed a sonnet, which, as we learn from Ruscelli, was committed to memory by almost every person of distinction at that time in Italy. It is a request to Ginevra that she would love him with platonic affection, and that, though another possessed her body, he might have her mind. The request was certainly not very reasonable, but the rhymes in which it is couched are extremely sweet. †

* Both Ginevra and Bernardo are mentioned in the concluding Canto of the *Orlando Furioso*, where the poet gives a catalogue of his friends. The compliment to the lady is a very singular one. It appears, from one of the letters of Bernardo, that Ariosto gave much offence by this catalogue, some of the persons named being displeased at the rank assigned, others at what was said of them.—*Lettere di Bernardo Tasso*, Vol. II. p. 335. Edit. Comin. Padoua, 1733.

† See Appendix, No. I. Bernardo had not been always so very refined in his passion for Ginevra, as appears from the following verses of his *Amadigi*.

La Malatesta, mia dolce nemica,
 Nel cui onesto foco arsi molt' anni,
 Che troppo (ahi lasso me) bella, e pudica,
 Cagion mi fu di così lunghi affanni.

Canto c.

Bernardo at last, perceiving that it would be necessary for him to find some lucrative employment, began to study politics, in order to fit himself for a situation in one of the courts in Italy. The subdivision of that country into a variety of petty states, which maintained a mutual intercourse, furnished with honourable offices a number of literary men, as such persons were generally chosen either as ambassadors, or as secretaries of those who followed the diplomatic profession. Bernardo was first employed in the service of Count Guido Rangone, general of the church. Soon after, he was sent to Paris, to urge Francis I. to hasten his army into Italy, for the purpose of liberating the pope, who had first been besieged, and afterwards imprisoned by the Imperialists.

When the war was terminated by the unfortunate expedition of Lautrech, Bernardo entered into the service of the Duchess of Ferrara, in which, however, he continued but a very short time. He seems to have been of a very restless disposition, and indeed this wandering sort of life was usual among his countrymen in general. Such was the number of cities and governments of Italy, that whoever was disgusted with one, found it necessary only to undertake a day's journey to reach another. From Ferrara, Bernardo went to Padua, and thence to Venice, where, collecting his compositions, he printed and dedicated them, under the title of *Amori* or Loves, to Ginevra Malatesta.

This volume coming into the hands of Ferrante Sanseverino, prince of Salerno, he, the same year in which it was

CHAP. I. printed (1531,) invited Bernardo to his court, near Naples, to act in the capacity of secretary. As the prince himself, and Donna Isabella Villa Marina his wife, were fond of poetry and literature, Bernardo seems to have lived as happily as one can do who is in a state of dependance. Occasionally he wrote poems in praise of his benefactors, and eager to give some public testimony of his gratitude, he again published his *Sonnets*, with the addition of a second book, dedicating this latter to the princess of Salerno, as the first, instead of being now dedicated to Ginevra Malatesta, was inscribed to the prince.

Bernardo, however, while in the service of Sanseverino, was not always employed in writing verses. In 1535, he accompanied that prince to Tunis, in the expedition of Charles V. to Africa, in order to re-establish Muley Hassan. Two years after, he was sent to Spain; upon his return from which, he published at Venice the third book of his *Sonnets*, his *Octaves to Julia Gonzaga*, and his *Hero and Leander*. Bernardo was now rising fast in fame and fortune. Accordingly, when in the forty-sixth year of his age, but possessed of several charms which he wanted when in his youth he had vainly sighed for Ginevra Malatesta, he resolved to marry. In his choice he was extremely fortunate. In spring 1539, he was united to Portia Rossi, of a very noble family, originally from Pistoia, but which for some time had been settled at Naples. With this lady he was promised a very considerable dowry, and the marriage was celebrated with much splendour.

Bernardo
marries.

Never does there appear to have lived a more fond and happy husband than Bernardo Tasso, and all his letters are filled with encomiums of his prudent, lovely, and beloved wife. As human felicity, however, is never unmixed, some of the courtiers of Sanseverino embroiled him to a considerable degree with that prince. Bernardo, however, found means of justifying himself; a hundred ducats were added to his income,* and he was permitted to withdraw from court, and devote himself in retirement to his studies. Accordingly, he retired with his wife, and Cornelia an infant daughter, to Sorrento, a delightful city in the neighbourhood of Naples. "I have chosen, says he, (in an epistle to a friend, dated August 20, 1543.) Sorrento for my residence, a city not far from Naples, and so delightful that the poets feigned it was the habitation of the Syrens. From this allegory you may judge of its beauty. I call this city delicious, not because it abounds with those pleasures which entice and administer to voluptuousness, but with such as are suitable to the health, and pleasure of the mind and body. Here I have recalled my mind, which was wont to be hurried from one business to another, as a bird from bough to bough; I have recalled it to studies, in such a manner, that I hope a birth will be produced, which will soon come to behold, to ornament and embellish itself, by the mirror of your judgment." "

Retires to
Sorrento.

* *Lettere*, Vol. I. p. 174.

CHAP. I.

Beautiful
situation of
that city.

In another letter, he describes at greater length, and with much poetical ornament, the situation of this agreeable residence. This description I shall here translate, not only as it affords a specimen of the florid eloquence of its author, but as Sorrento was the birth-place of Torquato, and was fixed upon by that poet to soothe his sorrows by its scenery, in the time of his uttermost distress. “ I have retired (writes Bernardo,) to Sorrento, by the favour of my prince, who has liberated me from the troubles and fatigues of active life. It is separated by the bay of a most placid sea from Naples, which, situated on a high hill, shews itself to beholders as if desirous that every one should see its beauty. Nature here, more bounteous and liberal than to the rest of the world, seems to have busied herself, and laboured to render it delightful. The deliciousness and peculiarity of the fruits, the variety and excellence of the wines, the goodness and quantity of its fishes, the tenderness and perfection of its animal food, render it, above all human desire, worthy of commendation and of wonder. The air is so serene, so temperate, so healthy, so vital, that those who continue here without changing the climate, seem almost to be immortal. Add to this, that the wall which nature, as if jealous of so dear a treasure, has formed around it, consists of the most lofty mountains. These are so green, so flowery, so abounding with fruits, that we need not envy Venus her Paphos and her Gnidus. The Naiads, who in general are so unwilling to inhabit the summits of the hills, enamoured of the beauty of these, pour on every side, from their silver urns, the freshest and

the purest streams, which, descending with a sweet murmur, defend the herbs and trees from the fury of the dogstar, which everywhere else scorches the earth. The poets have fabled that here was the habitation of the Syrens, to signify, that such are the delights of the country, that the man who enters, finds it impossible to leave it. Here, refreshed from all its cares and labours, my mind is restored to its dearest studies, and I shall endeavour, without offending God, to defend myself from the assaults of time and death." *

From many of the letters of Bernardo Tasso, it would seem that he was almost intoxicated with the happiness which he now enjoyed; and, in fact, it is scarcely possible for the imagination to picture to itself a condition of greater felicity. He had retired, after a life of dependance, labour, and anxiety, to a scene of tranquillity and happiness. He possessed a wife, who merited and enjoyed his utmost love. He was already father of a lovely daughter, and had hopes of other children as an ornament and support. He lived in a climate the most delightful, and amidst scenery the most beautiful, perhaps to be found in nature: And finally, he was engaged in a work, which he hoped would protect him from the assaults of death and time.

This work, which we have seen hinted at in the two letters I have quoted, was the *Amadigi*, of which he gives the following notice to his most beloved friend, the celebrated Sperone Speroni, while he sends him the first canto for his

Begins the
Amadigi.

* *Lettere*, Vol. I. p. 178.

CHAP. I.

perusal and criticism. After an account of his favourite Sorrento, with a description of which he seems at this time to have regaled all his friends, he proceeds in the following manner: " In this tranquil situation, I have begun to discharge the obligation which I came under to my lord, to Don Lewis of Avila, to other noblemen of the imperial court, and especially to yourself. I mean, I have begun to compose an Italian poem, on the history of Amadis de Gaul, for the structure of which I have not only prepared materials more than sufficient, but I have planned the edifice, and even arranged the imitations, comparisons, and metaphors, which are to form its ornaments. I have begun with fashioning it in prose, that this may serve as a model and example of the building. I cannot, as is your judgment and my desire, write it in blank verse, but must compose it in stanzas, such being the orders of my patron, to whom it would be a crime in me not to obey. In the quality and manner of the verse, I shall resemble Ariosto; in the order, and whatever else regards the disposition, I shall, as far as is compatible with my feeble powers, endeavour to imitate Virgil and Homer." *

Sperone Speroni.

As the name of Sperone Speroni, to whom this last cited letter is addressed, will frequently occur in this work, it may not be improper to mention a few circumstances concern-

* *Lettere*, Vol. I. p. 168. This letter must have been written prior to August 20, 1543, as it is referred to in the epistle of that date, from which a passage has been quoted. As Bernardo had already composed at Sorrento a canto of the *Amadigi*, and sketched the whole plan of that poem; his retirement thither, cannot be placed later than spring 1543.

ing him. He was the son of Bernardino Speroni, a noble Paduan, who was first a professor in the university of Padua, and afterwards physician to Leo X. Sperone was born at Padua on the twelfth of April 1500, and studied at Bologna under the celebrated Pomponatius. His progress was so great, that, at the age of twenty, he was appointed professor of logic in his native city. After the death of his father, in 1528, he married, and being involved in litigations, gave up his professorship. Several honourable commissions were entrusted to him by his country, and by different Italian princes, as he was greatly distinguished in the composition of those orations which were fashionable at that period. He was knighted by Pius IV. in 1564; and after living some years at Rome, returned in 1578 to Padua, where he died on the second of June 1588.

Sperone was deeply versed in the Greek and Latin languages, and was considered as the most learned and acute logician and critic of his age. He composed many treatises on morals and Belles-lettres, principally in the form of dialogue, which bear honourable testimony to his talents. The style of these works is excellent, and it is an eminent proof of the estimation in which they are held, that so late as 1740, a beautiful edition of them was printed at Venice. It consists of five quarto volumes, and to the fifth, an accurate life is prefixed by Forcellini.

What was principally to be regretted in Sperone, was harshness of temper; and the authors of his age had, in general, reason to complain of the severity, and, as they thought,

CHAP. I.

the malignity, of his critical censures. The severity of Sperone was probably owing in part to the following circumstance: He, too, had courted the Muses; and in the year 1546, his *Canace*, a tragedy, written on the strict Greek model, was printed surreptitiously at Venice. The subject of this piece is extremely atrocious; it is written with a very irregular admixture of verses of different lengths; and, though containing some fine passages, was furiously attacked, both as to invention and style, as soon as it appeared. Those, who have suffered literary misfortunes, do not learn from them to succour the miserable; but rather, like the truly damned, seem to rejoice in the damnation of their brethren. Sperone was deterred by critics from composing poems, but he seems to have taken his revenge, by attacking those who were considered by the public as more successful. His works contain two dialogues, and eight discourses against Virgil. In a letter to Bernardo, he censures Ariosto as a plagiarist, and rather a gander than a swan; and his faint praise of the productions of Torquato, or unjust silence, was such, that he for a considerable time made the young bard disgusted with himself, and with poetry.

Bernardo Tasso, however, seems not only to have had the highest admiration and deference, but even an enthusiastic fondness, for Sperone. In one of his letters, he calls him that most divine, and never enough exalted Sperone, “*quel divinissimo, e non mai appieno lodato M. Sperone.*” In another, apologising to a friend for not continuing his epistle,

he tells him, he was prevented from doing so by a visit of this writer, “ who might make the angels linger, says he, who are hastening to paradise;” “ *che potrebbe far aspettare gli angeli che andassero in paradiso.*” The regard of Sperrone for Bernardo seems to have been mutual, and he pays him the compliment, of introducing him as the principal speaker in one of his dialogues.

Before Bernardo had left Salerno, (for I shall now resume his story,) his wife had, besides his daughter, brought him a son, to whom he had given the name of Torquato, and who died in early infancy. A few months after going to Sorrento, Portia again conceived, and, as appears from his epistles, to the infinite joy of her husband. In a letter to his sister, the nun Donna Afra, to whom he apologises for not visiting her, he gives the following account of his family : “ My young daughter is very beautiful, and affords me great hopes that she will lead a virtuous and honourable life. My infant son is before God our creator, and prays for your salvation. My Portia is seven months gone with child ; whether a son or a daughter, it shall be supremely dear to me : only may God, who gives it me, grant that it may be born with his fear ; pray together with the holy nuns, that the Almighty may preserve the mother, who in this world is my highest joy.” *

Birth of Torquato Tasso.

Thus, with prayers and thanksgivings to God, Torquato

* *Lettere*, Vol. I. p. 288.

CHAP. I.

Tasso was welcomed into the world. He was born at Sorrento on the eleventh of March 1544. The course of his eventful life is to form the sequel of this history.*

* The house, or (as by the courtesy of Italy it is called) palace where Torquato was born, was (as we are told by Anastasio, *Lucubr. in Surrentinorum Ecclesiast. civilcsq. Antiquit. tom. II. p. 445.*) delightfully situated on the sea-shore, “ad litorales rupes amœnissimè prominentes.” It was so near the sea indeed, that the chamber where he was born was soon destroyed by the fury of the waves. Another reason for its destruction is assigned by the eloquent writer just mentioned. The chamber it seems was indignant at the reception of vulgar inhabitants after it had lost Torquato: “Ea concameratio non longum tempus substitit, sed fluctuum concussionibus subsedit, pertæsa fortasse e trivio incolas accipere, postquam præclarissimum Torquatum amisit.”

That Torquato was born at Sorrento, and at the period we mention, he himself informs us, “Ora sono in Napoli poche miglia lontano da Sorrento, città ove nacqui....Io nacqui del 1544, gli undici Marzo nel quale è la vigilia di S. Gregorio” [*Opere*, tom. IX. pp. 97, 387. In Venezia 1722.] I quote these passages, because there have been many disputes about the birth place of Torquato, which has furnished a world of common place comparison with Homer. Some mistakes have arisen from his having, as above mentioned, an elder brother of the same name, who died an infant. Even those who are forced to acknowledge that Tasso was born at Sorrento, do not therefore give up the point; and Manso argues, that he ought to be considered as a Neapolitan, as it was *by chance* that his birth happened in Sorrento, his mother being on a visit there from Naples. “Il tempo,” says he, “della generazione, molto più che del nascimento attendersi debba, come ottimamente conchiuse Ulpiano *Tempus enim conceptionis spectandum.*” This, however, serves the Marquis nothing, and his assertion is contradicted in the following angry manner by Serassi: “Il Manso e il Fasano pretendono che il Tasso sia *generato* in Napoli, e che per questa cagione si debba assolutamente chiamar Napoletano, ma ciò è falsissimo, perchè fu *concepito* e partorito in Sorrento,” pag. 21. not.

In a comedy of Goldoni, entitled *Torquato Tasso*, a considerable part of the humour consists in disputes on the birth-place of the poet. Tasso himself observing, that he was a Sorrentine, is thus taken up by Signor Tomio a Venetian, in his native patois, who denies, like Manso, that his birth at Sorrento is of any consequence in the dispute.

Compare, a sto discorso non posso più star saldo,
Sta rason, compatime, m'ha fatto vegnir caldo;
Se sè nassù in Sorrento, cossa conclude? Gnente.
Se sa, che là se nato, solo per accidente

CHAPTER II.

Departure of Bernardo Tasso to the army.—Strange circumstances related of the infancy of Torquato.—Return of his father.—Commutations at Naples.—Banishment of Bernardo.—Early progress of the young Tasso in learning.—He is sent for by his father from Naples to Rome.—His studies there.—Death of his mother.

A. D. 1544—1556.

AET. 1—12.

THE birth of Torquato Tasso seems to have formed the æra of the commencement of the misfortunes of his family. A few days before that period, a new war having arisen between the Emperor Charles V. and Francis I., the Count D'Enghien,

CHAP. II.

Vostra Mare xe andata a trovar so Sorella,
L'ha trategnua i parenti, l'ha partorio con ella,
S' è nassuo là, e per questo ? *Se nato fussi in Mar*
Concittadin dei pesci, ve faressi chiamar ?

Atto 3. Sc. 8.

Serassi quotes four authors for the purpose of proving that Tasso was born precisely at mid-day, (p. 21. note.) Nothing surely can be of less consequence; but the poet himself has recorded, that he was born about four o'clock in the morning, IX. p. 97.

CHAP. II.

early in spring, invested Carignan in Piedmont. This city, in the preceding year, had been surprised by the Marquis di Guasto, the Imperial general, and he, fond of his conquest, resolved to hazard a battle for its defence. The prince of Salerno, as general of the Italian infantry, joined the Spanish army; and recalled his secretary Bernardo from the sweet retirement of Sorrento. On the fourteenth of April, a month after the birth of Torquato, the Marquis di Guasto was severely wounded, and the Imperialists routed with great slaughter in the battle of Ceresola. The prince of Salerno greatly distinguished himself in the battle, and still more in the Spanish retreat.

Circumstances
told of Tasso's
childhood.

Before Bernardo departed to the army, he had left to Don Ernando de Torres, a Neapolitan gentleman, the charge of holding his child at the baptismal font. The infant was baptized in the metropolitan church of Sorrento, and the name Torquato was given him, which had been borne a few days by his elder brother. Of the childhood of Tasso, a number of circumstances are related, which are strongly impregnated with the odour of romance. When six months old, he spoke, it is said, in a clear and distinct manner; a faculty which he seems to have lost as he advanced in life. Not only this, but the infant reasoned, explained his thoughts, and answered appropriately to every question that was put to him. In his sentiments, it is added, there was nothing childish, nor could one who only heard him, have suspected he was an infant, except from the sound of his tender voice. He rarely wept, and never laughed; grave, dignified, and

sage, he announced by his behaviour, from the dawn of life, that he was destined for some great design. *

After the war of Piedmont, Bernardo accompanied Sanseverino to the Imperial court, whence returning in the beginning of next year : Sorrento he had the pleasure of embracing his lovely wife, and wonderful child. † From Sorrento he conducted his family to Salerno, where taking possession of his former house, he seems to have lived two

* These circumstances we are told by Manso, who informs us, that he learned them from people to whom they were confirmed on oath by the nurse of Torquato. Torquato, says he, "diè fin dal prim. degli anni suoi manifesto saggio della divinità dell' *ingegno*. Perocchè appena uscito dal sesto mese, cominciò fuor dell' uso degli altri fanciulli, non pure a suonar la lingua, ma a favellare eziando; e per sì fatta maniera, che non f. mai avvertito, ch' egli *balbetasse*, come fanno tutti i fanciulli, ma sempre formò le sue parole intiere, e con perfetto suono," &c.

That the faculty of speaking distinctly, and without stuttering, was lost by Torquato, after these exertions of his infancy, is evident from several passages in his works. In his *Cataneo* he says, "Però, non mi contentando della viva voce, o del parlare, nel quale *per l'impedimento della lingua* fui poco favorito dalla natura, pensai di scrivere la mia opinione." (*Oper.* vol. VIII. 138.) And in his *Malpiglio*, (*vol. cit.* p. 70.) talking of the tongue, he says, "La mia è *balba* come udite." The other circumstances of Tasso's infancy related by Manso, are probably equally apocryphal with that of his fluent eloquence, but they ought not to be overlooked by his biographer, as affording proofs of the high, and almost supernatural estimation in which, soon after his death, this poet was held by his countrymen.

† I cannot resist quoting on this occasion the beautiful lines of Catullus, worthy, as is observed by Sir William Jones, of the pencil of Dominichino.

"Torquatus volo parvulus,
Matris in gremio suae
Porrigens teneras manus;
Dulce rideat ad patrem,
Semihante labello."

CHAP. II.

years in the bosom of his family, and employed in the composition of his poem.

Commutations at
Naples.

The year 1547, was fatal to the interests of Sanseverino, and, by consequence, to those of Bernardo his secretary. Don Pedro de Toledo was at this time viceroy of Naples, a man who adorned that city with many magnificent works, and embellished it with numerous fountains, streets, and palaces. By his orders, the grotto of Pausilippo was hollowed out to its present vastness; and the Strada di Toledo, the noblest street in Naples, or perhaps in Europe, was in a great measure built by, and is named in honour of him. The viceroy, however, like all great reformers, was of a most despotic temper; he ruled the realm of Naples with a high hand, and spread disaffection in the most noble families of the kingdom. Amongst other innovations, he determined to introduce the inquisition, with the pretence of preventing the diffusion of the opinions of Luther, but really, under the mask of religion, to increase his own authority, and have it in his power to check and oppress the Barons, who were his enemies. To this proposal of the viceroy, the emperor and, after some time, the Pontiff Paul III. yielded their consent.

And soon, to be completely blest,
 Soon may a young Torquatus rise;
 Who, hanging on his mother's breast,
 To his known sire shall turn his eyes;
 Outstretch his infant arms a while,
 Half ope his little lips, and smile.

SIR W. JONES.

The nobility and people of Naples, hearing what was intended, sent deputies to Don Pedro, requesting him to lay aside his design. To these he gave a mild and evasive answer; but as he proceeded in his purpose, tumults succeeded, arms were seized on both sides, and considerable bloodshed took place in the city. In the mean time, while the people determined to oppose with force the viceroy, who had caused his Spanish troops to cannonade them, they resolved to send two ambassadors to the emperor, for the purpose of explaining their conduct. One of these was chosen on the part of the commons, the other by the nobility, who fixed their choice on Sanseverino, the first nobleman of the kingdom, and a relation of the emperor himself.*

The prince of Salerno, who hated the viceroy, seems to have accepted the embassy with joy. He was encouraged in this design by Bernardo Tasso, who had soon reason to repent of his advice, as this step, which he strenuously sup-

* The prince of Salerno, was son of Donna Maria of Arragon, niece of Ferdinand the Catholic, and cousin-german of the mother of Charles V. ("Summonte *Storia della città, e Regno di Napoli*," tom. IV. 230.) Serassi, whose Catholic orthodoxy is of the purest species, is anxious to vindicate the deputies from the wicked intention of soliciting the destruction of every sort of inquisition. "Veramente, says he, non era loro intenzione, che non si dovesse far argine all'eresie, e punire i colpevoli, conoscendone pur troppo anch'essi il bisogno. Solo avrebbero voluto che ciò si facesse dalla potestà ecclesiastica, e secondo l'uso d' Italia, e non alla maniera spaventevole di Spagna," (p. 28.) This is not the only proof the worthy biographer gives of the rectitude of his theological sentiments. The name of Milton does not once occur in his book, though so intimately connected with that of Tasso, and of Manso; nor must he have seen, without disapprobation and wonder, the diligence of his friend Tiraboschi, in searching among the literary monuments of his country, for the rudiments of the *Paradise Lost*.

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ported, had a very powerful and unhappy influence on his own destiny, and on that of his son, till the very close of their lives. On the arrival of Sanseverino at Nuremberg, where the emperor then was, he found that he had been anticipated by Don Pedro. That nobleman had sent the Marquis di Valle to give a prior statement; and as, to an absolute prince, whatever comes in a popular form, is looked upon with a suspicious eye, Sanseverino had very little reason to boast of his reception. In a short time, his brother ambassador was sent home, with admonitions to the people to be quiet and obedient. This counsel, which was all their ambassador had gained by his mission, had at first an effect contrary to what it was designed to produce. The people rose in great commotion, but being resisted with firmness, and perceiving that their efforts would be vain, they not only laid down their arms, but (rushing, as is usual, from one extreme to another,) they delivered them to the viceroy, with all their artillery.

Bernardo goes
to Nuremberg.

In the meantime, the prince of Salerno was detained at Nuremberg, which he was forbidden to leave under pain of death. His situation was not very comfortable; and he was equally chagrined at the conduct of the emperor, who had trampled on, and of the Neapolitans, who had so easily surrendered their rights. He now wrote for his secretary Bernardo, who had remained at Salerno, and who thus found it necessary (August 1547) to leave his wife and two children, one of six, and the other three years of age. His family he entrusted to the care of John D'Angeluzzo, a re-

spectable and learned priest, who had resided a considerable time in his house.

At the court of the emperor, Bernardo formed some of those associations, which are, while no claim is founded on them, termed friendships; particularly with Perenotto, bishop of Arras (afterwards cardinal Granvelle) to whom he soon after dedicated a volume of letters. He was, however, extremely impatient to return to his family, and frequently soothed his sorrows by writing to his Portia. Of these epistles one most beautiful specimen is preserved. It relates principally to the moral and religious education of children; and Bernardo tells her, that as he trusted to her care to embellish their young Cornelia with every grace and virtue which can adorn a virgin, so he reserved for himself the instruction of Torquato, when he should arrive at a suitable age. * Of his little son he seems to have been peculiarly fond. "Write to me, (says he, in a letter to John D'Angeluzzo his governor) write to me I pray you, and by your diligence increase the obligations I am already under to you. Particularly inform me about my little Torquato, for it is impossible for you to imagine the delight I take in every circumstance which concerns him." †

* *Lettere*, vol. I. p. 396. The length of this beautiful letter, prevents me from translating and publishing it here. It must be acknowledged, however, that the epistles of Bernardo, though sensible and elegant, are written too much in a kind of academic style, abounding with figures and conceits, and having the appearance, not of natural effusions, but of compositions intended for publication. This want of simplicity was indeed the defect of his age, or rather, it is that of the Italian prose writers in general.

† *Lettere*, vol. I. 435.

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Bernardo re-
turns.

After having remained about a year at the Imperial court, the prince of Salerno had liberty to depart, having obtained in part, and in part failed in the purpose of his mission. On his arrival at Naples, whither he was accompanied by Bernardo, he carried himself in a very haughty manner to the viceroy, whose good will had by no means been increased by his embassy. Sanseverino was persecuted in different ways, and at last, (1551,) was wounded in an attempt to assassinate him. This, he had reason to believe, had been planned by the viceroy, especially as he openly protected the assassin, and found means so to represent the matter to the emperor, that little attention was paid to the accusation of Sanseverino, who was represented as a favourer of heresy and rebellion.

Again leaves
his family.

During these vexations, and since his return from Germany, Bernardo had resided at Salerno, attending to his own studies, and the education of his son ; except when sent on missions necessary for the business of his employer. But the prince, now resolving to leave a country where he was no longer safe, Bernardo determined to follow his fortunes. With this view, he deemed it proper to conduct his family to Naples, for the double purpose of facilitating the education of his son, and that his wife might be in the neighbourhood of her mother and brothers. Accordingly, apartments were procured for them in the palace of Gambacorti, and these being furnished in a noble manner, and an establishment formed, Bernardo departed with his master.

The prince of Salerno was, it is said, resolved at first to

proceed to the emperor, with complaints of the injurious treatment he had suffered. But reflecting how little he had formerly succeeded, and having good reason to believe that his reception at this time would not be very gracious, he determined to take shelter in France. He hoped that Henry II. would appoint him general against Naples, where he expected to be joined by all his own friends, and by those who detested the government of the viceroy.

When the news of the rebellion of the prince of Salerno arrived at Naples, he was, by a convocation of the states in 1552, declared a rebel, deprived of all his estates, and sentenced to have incurred the penalty of death. The same edict passed against all his adherents, one of whom Bernardo Tasso had been for the space of twenty-two years. By the confiscation of his property, Bernardo lost a most elegant house at Salerno, furnished richly, and adorned, he tells us, with precious tapestry. He was also deprived of nine hundred scudi of annual revenue; so that, except a few jewels, nothing remained but the hope of the dowry of his wife, and the moveables which had been carried to Naples, when Portia went thither with her family. On the other hand, the prince of Salerno was declared captain-general against Naples, had a considerable annual provision assigned him in the meantime, and was appointed viceroy of that kingdom, provided he made himself its master, of which there was at this time every prospect of success.

Is declared a
rebel.

Meanwhile, Portia and her family remained dejected in

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the city of Naples, among relations, who seem to have had little regard either to justice or humanity. She did not, however, neglect the education of her children, and especially of her Torquato, who had now attained his seventh year. A short time before this period, a few of the Infant Society of Jesus, had been received into Naples, had built a small church near the palace of Gambacorti, where Portia resided, and had begun the instruction of youth, with that diligence and success for which they became afterwards so celebrated. To this school, as being in the neighbourhood, Torquato was sent; and such was the ardour with which he studied, that, not contented with rising with the sun, his mother found it necessary, for the sake of quiet, to send him frequently to his master before day-break, with a lanthorn before him, to shew him the road. During the three years that he continued under the tuition of those fathers, the young Tasso perfected himself in the Latin tongue, of which he had been taught the principles by Angeluzzo. In addition to this, he made good progress in Greek, and had attended with such diligence to rhetoric and poetry, that, in the tenth year of his age, he recited in public, orations and verses, which were heard with admiration. Great talents are almost always early, but (as in Pascal) those of Tasso were of a precocity that indicated a delicacy of organization, which much intellectual labour is too apt to destroy. Torquato had the good fortune to be born of most religious parents; his father was peculiarly anxious to inspire his tender mind with an affectionate love, and reverential fear

Early progress
of Torquato in
learning.

of God ; * and his masters did not neglect to cultivate the seeds which had been so early sown. “ The father Jesuits,” says he, (in a letter first published by Serassi,) “ under whose direction I was educated, made me communicate when I was perhaps scarcely nine years of age, though from the height of my body, and the maturity of my mind, I might have passed for a youth of twelve. When I communicated, I had not yet learned that the real body of Christ is truly in the Host; nevertheless, moved by a certain secret devotion, which the dignity and sanctity of the place, and habits, and which the murmurs, and the beating the breast among the bystanders had produced in me, I received with the most profound devotion the body of Christ, and I felt within, a certain indescribable and unwonted satisfaction.” †

Of the progress of his son, Bernardo had frequently the consolation of being instructed by his wife, whose letters were transmitted to him by John Angelo Papio, his intimate friend. This gentleman was successively professor of law in different universities of Italy ; was afterwards one of the most illustrious prelates of the Roman church, and merits well to

* *Letter to Portia*, vol. I. p. 399. “ E di mestieri che procuriate con tutte le forze vostre, con ogni vostra diligenza d'imprimere nella pargoletta anima il nome (di Dio) l'amore, e i pensieri di lui, affine che impari ad amare, e ad onorare colui, dal quale riceve non solo la vita, ma tutti i beni, e le grazie che possono fare l'uomo felice in questo mondo, e beato nell' altro,” &c. I may remark too, before closing my account of this letter, that Bernardo cautions Portia by no means to strike her child. “ Biasimo,” says he, “ quelli che battono i figliuoli, non meno che se nella immagine di Dio avessero ardire di porre le mani.”

† Serassi *Vita del Tasso*, p. 48.

CHAP. II.

Bernardo sent
to Paris.

be recorded in this history, as at all times a constant and affectionate friend of the Tassi. In July, this year (1552,) Bernardo was sent to Paris by his prince, who had continued chiefly to reside at Venice. Upon his arrival at that city, he heard news which withered all his hopes with regard to the fortunes of Sanseverino, and by consequence of his own. The king of France had solicited Sultan Solymán to second his operations against Naples, by sending a fleet into the Mediterranean. With this request, the Turkish monarch readily complied, not only from his eagerness to profit by the quarrels of the Christian princes, but because he was incensed against the emperor, on account of some late proceedings in Hungary. Accordingly, he ordered a hundred and fifty ships to be equipped, under the command of the Corsair Dragut, in order to co-operate with the French. Dragut “appeared on the coast of Calabria, at the time which had been agreed on, landed at several places, plundered and burned several villages, and at last, casting anchor in the bay of Naples, filled that city with consternation. But as the French fleet, detained by some accident, which the contemporary historians have not explained, did not join the Turks according to concert, they, after waiting twenty days without hearing any tidings of it, set sail for Constantinople, and thus delivered the viceroy of Naples from the terror of an invasion, which he was in no condition to have resisted.” *

* Robertson's *Charles V.* vol. IV. 128. Edit. London, 1777. 8vo.

The departure of the Turkish fleet is attributed by the Italian writers, to the treachery or fidelity of Cæsar Mormile. It was joined off Ischia, on the eighteenth of August, by twenty-six French galleys, under the command of the prince of Salerno. In vain that prince endeavoured to prevail on the Turkish admiral to return; on the contrary, he himself was persuaded by Dragut to accompany him to Constantinople; and assurances were given, that he would obtain from the Sultan a more numerous squadron in the following year.

Meanwhile, Bernardo at Paris, spared neither verse nor prose, in soliciting the French monarch to undertake the invasion of Naples. Finding, however, that he met with no great success, he retired to the suburb of St Germain, where he spent his time partly in continuing his poem, but principally in writing sonnets in praise of Margaret of Valois. This lady, who, according to Brantome, was called the Pallas of France, was sister to the reigning monarch, and daughter of Francis I. whose love of literature she inherited.* Bernardo, however, did not forget his family at

1553.
Act. 9.

* Elle a esté si sage & vertueuse, si parfaite en sçavoir & sapiënce, qu'on luy donna le nom de la Minerve ou Pallas de la France.

Brantome, *Memoires des Dames Illustres*, I. 323.

This lady was the subject of eulogy to a vast number of poets of different nations. The Chancellor de l'Hospital takes notice of this circumstance in some verses addressed to her; and I quote them both as appertaining to this subject, and as a testimony of respect to a man so worthy as that chancellor of the esteem of posterity.

Et tibi judicium, tibi doctas Delius aures
Præbuit, ac regale refersit pectus honestis

CHAP. II.

A. D. 1553.
Act. 9.

Naples; but as he still expected the siege of that city, he wrote to his wife, that he was desirous she should retire to Sorrento, the birth place of Torquato. Should that not seem eligible, he hoped that an ecclesiastic, the only friendly brother she had, would conduct her and her family to Rome, where that priest was at this time going to establish himself. He was very unwilling that she should retire to a monastery, into which, at any rate, it was not probable that Torquato, now a well-grown boy, would be admitted. *

Of the siege of Naples, however, there was soon no hope, as Sanseverino had not succeeded at Constantinople, nor, on his return to France, where he found the king disconcerted by some late successes of Charles V. could he prevail on him to think of the affairs of Italy. The affliction of Bernardo at this circumstance was increased by the departure from Rome of the friendly Papio, who had been accustomed to transmit to him the letters of his wife. On her side, her spirits were quite sunk by the long absence of her husband; by the want of a protector; by the smallness of her income; and by the cruelty of her family at Naples, in whose hands her dowry had remained, and who withheld even the greater part of the interest. From law she could

Artibus; eximiam, raramque in principe laudem.
Tantum nulla decus tulit unquam regia Virgo.
Innumeros haec causa viros, ut condere carmen
Utque suos vellent tibi consecrare labores
Impulit; haec fuit iis scribendi causa poetis.

* *Lettre*, vol. II. p. 100.

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A. D. 1553.
Act. 9.

expect nothing, as the inexorable viceroy continued his persecution of the families of all those who had followed the fortunes of the prince of Salerno.

This unfortunate woman never ceased to entreat Bernardo that he would remove her from Naples, where she was exposed to innumerable outrages and dangers ; and would cause her to be conducted where she might lead a life, if not splendid, (which she neither wished, nor, in the circumstances of her husband, could hope for,) at least secure and tranquil with him and her children. Soon after, he heard that she and her daughter were afflicted by severe sickness ; and it is scarcely possible to imagine the distraction of mind which Bernardo must have undergone amidst so many calamities. Driven into exile, from a state of the highest tranquillity, into poverty, from a state of riches, into widowhood, from the caresses of a most hopeful family, and the possession of a lovely wife ; following in a distant country the fortunes of a beloved and ruined master, soliciting in vain for favour, and hearing in letters, which were the only remaining source of consolation, of the poverty, persecution, and sickness of his family. *

After suffering some time longer that sickness of the heart which arises from hope deferred, Bernardo received permission of his master to return to Italy. He departed from

Bernardo returns to Italy.

* *Lettere*, vol. II. p. 118, 120. The argument of the last of these letters, though on a very melancholy subject, cannot fail to excite a smile. “ Questa lettera è tutta piena di sviscerato affetto, e di lamentazioni per le sventure di sua moglie, e de’ suoi figliuoli, ed è sparsa di belle similitudini.

CHAP. II.
A. D. 1553.
Act. 9.

Paris in the end of December 1553, and arrived at Rome in the beginning of February thereafter. During the pontificate of Julius III. the imperial faction was all powerful at Rome, and they having obtained from the pope, that all the Neapolitan rebels should be banished from that city, it was necessary for Bernardo to obtain a particular licence. This was effected without much difficulty, especially as it was pretended that he had no longer any connexion with the prince of Salerno. With him, however, he still kept up a private correspondence; and, as he retained from that prince an annual pension of three hundred scudi, he hoped to live in a tranquil and comfortable manner.

1554.
Act. 10.

The next thing Bernardo undertook, was to find lodgings for his family, in which he was soon successful, having apartments assigned him in his palace by Cardinal Ippolito II. da Este, of the house of Ferrara; a house rendered immortal by its patronage of literature. Nor could this courtesy of the cardinal give much umbrage to the imperialists, as Bernardo had formerly been a retainer of the Ferrarese court. He was now extremely anxious for the arrival of his Portia and the children; but her leaving Naples was opposed by her brothers, who by no means wished to pay the dowry, and who would neither find security for it, nor allow her to depart.* It was even with extreme difficulty that Bernardo could obtain permission for her to retire to a monastery. In this, however, he was at last successful, and

* *Lettere*, Vol. II. p. 142.

she entered with her daughter, as pensioners, among the nuns of San Festo, in October 1554.

CHAP. II.

A. D. 1554.
Act. 10.

It was now necessary for this unfortunate mother to separate from her son, who was called to Rome by his father, for the purpose of education. The horrors of this parting from a mother, whom he never again beheld, and who had been endeared to him by misfortunes, seems to have made a deep impression upon the youthful mind of Torquato. It is impossible to read, without strong emotions of sympathy, the following verses, in which, amongst others, bewailing the calamities of his life, he pathetically refers to this mournful event.

Torquato
leaves his mother.

Me dal sen della Madre empia Fortuna
Pargoletto divelse; ah di que' baci,
Ch'ella bagnò di lagrime dolenti,
Con sospir mi rimembra, e degli ardenti
Pregghi, che se n'portar l'aure fugaci,
Ch'io non dovea giunger più volto a volto
Fra quelle braccia accolto
Con nodi così stretti e sì tenaci.
Lasso! e seguj con mal sicure piante,
Qual Ascanio o Camilla, il padre errante.*

On the arrival of the young Tasso at Rome, which took place about the end of October 1554; he found his father

Arrives at
Rome.

* Relentless Fortune, in my early years,
Remov'd me from a mother's tender breast;
With sighs I still recall the farewell tears,
Which bath'd her kisses, while my lips she prest.

CHAP. II.

A. D. 1554.
Act. 10

confined in bed by a sickness, which had lasted several months. The youthful poet had, however, a striking lesson of the strength of that last infirmity of noble minds, the desire of fame, and of the consolation which is imparted by liberal studies amidst all the persecutions of fortune and of fate. Bernardo, as has been mentioned, had, while in France, composed a number of poems, principally complimentary to Margaret of Valois. The MS. of these he, on the twentieth of October this year, transmitted to Lodovico Dolce, that they might be printed at Venice. In the same letter, he tells Lodovico, that notwithstanding his indisposition, he never lost sight of his *Amadigi*, and that he was now in hopes that it would soon be finished.*

At this time, the chevalier John James Tasso, hearing

I hear her prayers with ardour breath'd to heaven—
But ah! dispers'd, and wasted by the wind—
No more to her unhappy son t'was given,
The endearments of maternal love to find.

No more her fondling arms did round me spread—
Forc'd from her sight, and, struggling, I retire;
Like young Camilla, or Ascanius, led
To trace the footsteps of my wandering sire.

Hoole (from whom the above translation is, with a few changes, taken,) and almost all the other biographers of our poet, represent this as warbled forth by Tasso, at the time of his departure from his mother to Rome, and wonder, as indeed they may, at the precocity of his early powers. It was sung twenty-four years afterwards, in the year 1578, at the period of his second flight from the court of Ferrara. The Canzone begins, *O del grand' Apemmino*, (vol. VI. p. 283.) is left unfinished, and is perhaps the most beautiful poem of that species composed by its author.

* *Lettere*, Vol. II. p. 144.

CHAP. II.

A. D. 1554.
Act. 10.Companion of
Torquato's
studies.

that his relation Bernardo was established at Rome, and that he expected his family, wrote from Bergamo, soliciting him to take charge of Christopher, his second son, and to cause him to be educated together with Torquato. With this request Bernardo readily complied. This young man arrived at Rome on the twenty-eighth of November 1554, as we learn from a letter of Bernardo of the sixth of December following. "Nine days ago", says he, "Christopher arrived here safe and happy, to my great satisfaction, but still more to that of Torquato, who had expected him with much impatience, and loved him even before he saw him. Be assured, that I shall be as watchful, and even more so, over him as over my own son. Let it not grieve you that Signora Portia is not here, for I have a good housekeeper, and an aged and worthy priest, who has served me seventeen years, and who will love and guard them as if they were his own children. Above all, I have the satisfaction of informing you, that they have the best master in Italy, a most learned man, and possessed of almost every language. This gentleman has a more elegant and abridged method of teaching than has ever been used, and is, besides, a well bred man, with nothing of the pedant." *

The two young men applied to their studies with a very different degree of zeal, for though Christopher was possessed of considerable talents, he had no great taste for learning. The example of Torquato, however, served to spur him

1555.
Act. 11.* *Lettere*, vol. III. p. 70.

CHAP. II.

A. D. 1555.
Act. 11.Torquato's
fondness of
study.

on, so that he became in time a good theologian, and arrived at length at the dignity of archdeacon of the church of Bergamo. In a letter to the father of the young man, (dated November 16, 1555) Bernardo gives the following account of the occupation of the boys: "Christopher, thank God, is well, and is improving in learning, though rather by the diligence of the teacher, than through natural inclination. His genius indeed is acute, but his attachment to literature is not strong. That of Torquato is violent in the highest degree, and this serving as an incitement to the other, he advances, thank God, pretty well. Already, he reads Greek, and knows the declension of the nouns, and the conjugation of the verbs. I have pensioned them during these four or five winter months, because they learn more by night than by day, and in rainy and stormy, than in good weather." * In another letter, of the twenty-third of December the same year, he again mentions Christopher's progress in Greek, in which, he says, it is probable he will succeed better than in Latin: "Torquato," says he, "takes more care of him than if he were a brother; he listens while he repeats his lessons, and serves him as a rival. In short, he is so fond of him, that it would be an extreme vexation to me to separate the one from the other." † Of the anxiety of Bernardo, that Torquato and his young friend should make progress in this most elegant language, we have the following proof: The teacher with whom they were, not

* *Lettere*, vol. III. p. 73.

† Vol. III. p. 80. See also p. 94, 104, &c.

having sufficient leisure to attend to their Greek studies, Bernardo, in spite of great pecuniary difficulties, did not hesitate to pay a scudo of gold each month to another instructor, that he might read the young men an extraordinary lesson in Greek. *

Notwithstanding all the efforts that Bernardo made with Cardinal Pacecco, who had succeeded Toledo in the government of Naples, † he could not obtain that his wife might leave that kingdom, without the hazard of wholly losing her dowry, which, for the sake of their children, and considering their dependant situation, she and her husband were both unwilling to risk. The life of a courtier, like the cloud and sunshine of a day in autumn, is a continual and quick succession of hopes and fears. About this time, the prospects of Bernardo Tasso were greatly brightened by the elevation of Cardinal Carrafa to the pontifical dignity. To this prince, who assumed the name of Paul IV., Bernardo was known; and as his three nephews, by whom he was absolutely governed, were enemies to the imperial faction, that poet did not doubt, that his calamities would soon close,

* The education of Milton, too, united the various advantages of public and of private instruction. "Et in ludo literario," says he, in speaking of his father's attention to the cultivation of his mind, "et sub aliis domi magistris, erudiendum quotidie curavit."

Defensio secunda, Works, vol. V. 230. 8vo.—SYMMONS' Edition.

† Toledo, after repeated orders from the emperor, left Naples January 6th, 1553, to assist in the war at Sienna. He departed, shedding many tears, in which he was joined by nobody; and having reached Florence, was seized with a fever, and died on the 22d of February. Muratori says, (*Annal. d' Ital. all. ann. 1553.*) "Si cercò in Napoli uno che piangesse la sua morte, e non si trovò."

CHAP. II.

and that he would again be restored to his former domestic endearments.

1556.
Act. 12.

Death of Por-
tia.

These hopes were, however, blasted by tidings which arrived in the beginning of February 1556, of the death of his beloved spouse. This unfortunate woman closed a life, of which a considerable part had since her marriage been spent in tears, after a violent illness of only twenty-four hours. Bernardo had the horrible suspicion that she had been poisoned by her relations; and of his sentiments on her death we have the following account, in a letter to Americo Sanseverino.

“ Fortune, not content with my past miseries, has, in order to render me completely wretched, deprived me of that unfortunate young woman my wife, and has destroyed, by her death, all my happiness, the support of my poor children, and the only hope I had of comfort in my disconsolate old age. I weep the loss of that poor young woman, whom I loved more than life, and yet whom I loved less than she deserved. I weep, and I accuse myself as the cause of her death, because I ought not, either through a vain ambition, or affection to my prince, have abandoned her, my unfortunate children, and the government of my house. I ought the less to have done this, as I knew that I left her destitute of all direction, of all favour, of all human aid, at the disposal of my adverse fortune, and in the hands not of brothers, but of bitter foes. . . . But God has thought fit to punish her for my iniquities, and to embitter, by her death, the remainder of a life which perhaps will be too long. I lament the na-

ture of her death, which has been violent, having taken place in twenty-four hours, and caused (as far as I can conjecture,) either by poison or a broken heart. I lament my daughter, who unfortunately for herself remains alive, young, without direction, in the hands of enemies, without a friend, but a wretched father, poor, old, distant, and in disgrace with fortune. I pray God, that he may grant me patience, for if my despair and misery find not soon a remedy, I know not what will become of me." *

It would appear, that the pension Bernardo had from the prince of Salerno, was either precarious, or too small for his comfortable subsistence, for he hints, in the letter I have just quoted, what great claims he had on that prince, who in some degree might be considered as the cause of his misfortunes. From the circumstances of his situation, and the aforesaid letter, we may judge how ill qualified Bernardo was at this time to afford consolation. This, however, he attempts, in an epistle to the nun Donna Afra, his sister, of whom I have already made mention. "I know," says he, "that the more I loved her, the less I ought to grieve for the bitter and untimely death of that young woman, since death is the end of all human miseries, into an ocean of which (suffering for my sake) she was continually plunged.

* *Lettere*, vol. II. p. 157. See also p. 164. et seq. That Bernardo believed she was poisoned by her brothers, appears from a letter, vol. III. p. 82. "Proccuro con tutti i favori e forze necessarie di ricuperar quella povera figliuola dalle man de' suoi nemici: acciocchè non avvenga a lei quel ch'è avvenuto alla misera madre, la quale tengo per fermo che sia stata avvelenata da' fratelli per guadagnar la dote."

CHAP. II.

A. D. 1556.
Act. 12.

What human comfort remained which could lead you, in her wretched situation, to wish her a continuance of life? Alas, none! With a great understanding, with much prudence and virtue, she was left, by my banishment, in a kind of widowhood, without relations, or, what was worse than none; without friends to aid or counsel her in adversity, so that she lived in a continual state of fear and anxiety. She was young, beautiful, and so jealous of her honour, that, contrary to our natural instinct, she has often wished, since my unhappy exile, that she were old and ugly. She doubted not her own honour, of which she was an inviolable protectress, but she dreaded the false opinions of the world, and the snares of men; so that, like a shepherd who keeps his flocks near a dangerous desert, she never enjoyed a sleep which was sound and peaceful. She loved myself and Torquato so much, that, seeing herself separated from us, without hope of living happily under the same roof, her heart was tortured by a thousand fears, as the heart of Tityus by the devouring vultures. Let us not, however, be rebels to the will of God, but let us endeavour to submit our minds to his dispensations. Let us thank him for the benefits which we daily receive, and try rather to provide against the misfortunes which admit of a remedy, than to weep and bewail what it is impossible to cure." *

* *Lettere*, vol. II. p. 172. Portia seems to have been a woman of deep sensibility, and with strong passions: "Desiderando," says Bernardo, "mia moglie di viver meco, ancor ch'io stessi nell' inferno." *Ibid.* p. 142.

CHAPTER III.

Bernardo leaves Rome, and enters into the service of the Duke of Urbino.—Torquato visits Bergamo, and afterwards resides at Pesaro.—His studies there.—Circumstances relative to the Amadigi.—Torquato visits Venice, and is sent to study at Padua.—Marriage of his sister Cornelia.—Publication of the Amadigi, and reflections on its want of success.

A. D. 1556—1560.

AET. 12—16.

I KNOW not whether I ought again to apologise to my reader, for detaining him so long upon what he may perhaps consider as extraneous to the life of Tasso. The events, however, which I have related, will be found, in the sequel of these memoirs, to have had a strong and singular influence on the future destiny of that poet. Besides, on a little reflection, it will be perceived, that the circumstances in this

CHAP. III.

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A. D. 1556.
Act. 12.

case are extremely peculiar. Genius is very seldom hereditary in a family ; nor is there an example in story of so illustrious a poet being the father of so great a son. Of the greater number of celebrated men, the fathers have been obscure individuals, and hence no documents have been left, either of their own lives, or of the infancy or childhood of their children. The reputation of Bernardo Tasso, the publication of his epistles, and the early celebrity of his son, have, with the accident of his being born in a country which is peculiarly favourable to the biographical enquirer, produced a concurrence of circumstances, which take place in this instance, and perhaps in this alone. The history of other great men begins in general, like that of Adam, when they have attained maturity ; the history of Torquato commences not merely in the morning, but at the dawn of his existence.

Nor is it difficult, perhaps, in the events which have already been related, to discover some of the elements which contributed to the production both of the intellectual and moral disposition of Torquato. In the few instances of hereditary talents of which we have examples, as in the Bernoullis and Cassinis, the children have generally followed the example of their parents. Torquato would undoubtedly have been a poet, whatever had been his descent, but it is not so certain that he would have had the same poetical notions. His creed in poetry we shall find to have had considerable resemblance to that of Bernardo ; and it is not to be doubted, that the example and ardour of that poet very

much contributed to the nourishment of the poetical faculty in his son. *

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A. D. 1556.
Act, 12.

* "The admiration of the father's worth, (says Bernardo, in the letter to his wife on the subject of education,) is a most pungent stimulus to urge the spirit of the son to hurry on in the path which his parent pursues." "L'ammirazione della paterna virtù è pungentissimo sprone per far correre lo spirito del figliuolo per quel medesimo cammino che corre il padre." In the lamentations of the young Rinaldo, that, though born of illustrious parents, he had not yet been able to distinguish himself, Torquato no doubt paints his own feelings, and the share that his father's reputation had in inciting him to enter the path of glory.

E camminando, in breve spatio d'hor
Giunse d'un prato in sul fiorito ergo,
Che sì giacea trà molte piante ascoso,
Ond' era poi formato un bosco ombroso.

* * *

Deh, perchè almeno, oscura stirpe humile
A me non diede, o padre ignoto il Fato.
O femina non son tenera, e vile,
Che non andrei d'infamia tal macchiato,
Perciocch' in sangue illustre, e signorile,
In huom d'alti parenti al mondo nato,
La viltà si raddoppia, e più si scorge,
Che in coloro, il cui grado alto non sorge.

Rinaldo, Can. 1. St. 18.

Now hasting thence, a verdant mead he found,
Where flowers of fragrant smell adorn'd the ground;
High o'er its surface, many a tree display'd
Its leafy boughs, to form a grateful shade—
Sweet was the scene, and here from human eyes
Apart he sits, and thus he speaks mid sighs.

Ah why do rage, and grief, and shame delay,
To waste, like flames, my vital frame away,
Since thus inglorious, abject thus I groan,
A burden to myself, to men unknown!—
No deed I boast, estrang'd as yet from fame,
I taint a race renown'd, a glorious name—

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A. D. 1556.
Aet. 12.

We have seen, too, that Torquato had the happiness of being born of most religious parents, and that principles of piety were implanted in him from his most early years. This probably had a considerable effect in determining his choice to the subject of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, and certainly not merely warmed and exalted his genius in general, but enabled him to write many passages in his poem, with all the unction and fervour of the most seraphic devotion. While, in the religious principles of the young poet, we may perceive, perhaps, the first bias of the future direction of his talents, it may be observed, that his very early, eager, and long continued application to study, had some effect in injuring at length the health of his body, and probably that of his mind: For his faculties being for so many years kept continually strained, were ultimately, perhaps, impaired by the exertion.

Effects of early
misfortunes on
the mind.

It may be remarked too, that though the sensibility which is in general the attendant of genius, does not seem favourable to happiness, yet there is no doubt that the dejection and suffering to which Torquato so early was a witness, had a predominating tendency to produce and increase that me-

What wretch does Phœbus view like me deprest,
Unblest by fortune, nor by virtue blest?—
Oh! that at least my fate had been decreed,
In humble life, no branch from noble seed;
Why was I not a timid woman born!
Nameless indeed, but not expos'd to scorn;
Deep, deep is shame, when slothful men disgrace
The well-earn'd honours of a god-like race.

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Act. 12.

lancholy which had afterwards the effect of occasionally overpowering his reason. “ Extreme sensibility, (says Burns, when talking of his frequent depression of spirits,) irritated and prejudiced on the gloomy side, by a series of misfortunes and disappointments, at that period of my existence when the soul is laying in her cargo of ideas for the voyage of life, is, I believe, the principal cause of this unhappy frame of mind.”* I have observed, indeed, that of men, who, like Johnson, have been in the habit of sinking into frequent fits of despondence, the greater part had spent an unhappy and dependent youth. For it is one of the great evils attending protracted misfortune, that the mind acquires a habit of viewing objects as surrounded with a continual gloom, and that it ceases at last to believe in security or happiness.

The cause remov'd, habitual griefs remain,
And the soul saddens by the use of pain. †

I shall now resume my narration, which these reflections have somewhat interrupted. The first object of Bernardo,

* *Works*, vol. II. 163.

† *Odyssey*. X. 550. The same sentiment is beautifully expressed in the following lines of Seneca:

Pectora, longis hebetata malis,
Non sollicitas ponunt curas :
Proprium hoc miseros sequitur vitium,
Nunquam rebus credere lætis.
Redeat felix Fortuna licet,

CHAP. III.

A. D. 1556.
Act. 12.*Iniquity of Tor-
quato's uncles.*

after the death of his wife, was to rescue Cornelia from the hands of her relations, especially as he imagined that they had poisoned his wife for her dowry, and probably might poison his daughter. Immediately after the death of Portia, her brothers, who pretended to take their niece under their protection, began a lawsuit against Torquato, alleging, that as he had followed his father to Rome, he too had incurred the penalties of rebellion. This plea was under cover of love to Cornelia, but really to keep the portion in their hands, nothing being more ridiculous than that a boy of twelve years of age, who had been sent for by his father for the purpose of education, should be considered as a rebel. From such people, it is natural to think that Bernardo was extremely anxious to liberate his daughter, who was now an extremely beautiful and accomplished girl, of fifteen years of age. *

Tamen afflictos gaudere piget.
Nulla surgens dolor ex causâ
Hos flere jubet, sed vagus intro
Terror oberrat, subitos fundunt
Oculi fletus; nec causa subest,
Imber vultu nolente cadit.

Seneca, Thyestes.

The biographer of Cowper, speaking of that poet, who, in several unfortunate circumstances, though far from equalling the sublimity of his genius, resembled Tasso, says, "He (Cowper) has been frequently heard to lament the persecution he sustained in his childish years from the cruelty of his school-fellows, in the two scenes of his education. *** The acuteness of his feelings in his childhood, rendered those important years miserable years of increasing timidity and depression, which, in the most chearful hours of his advanced life, he could hardly describe to an intimate friend, without shuddering at the recollection of his early wretchedness."—Vol. I. 12. 8vo.

* *Lettere*, vol. II. 201, 388.

For this purpose, Bernardo not only applied to different powerful personages, but, in order to produce the same effect, employed his son Torquato. In his name, we have the following letter to Signora Vittoria Colonna, dictated however by his father: "To assist (says he) a poor gentleman, who, without any fault of his own, and in endeavouring to preserve his honour, has fallen into calamities and misery, is the part of a mind noble and magnanimous like yours. And unless, madam, you remedy by your favour this misfortune, my poor father will die of despair, and your Excellency will lose a most affectionate and devoted servant. I entreat you, madam, to oppose your favour to the malignity of his fortune, and not to suffer the rapacity and impiety of mankind to cause him to perish. Your Excellency will learn from my agent, that Scipio Rossi, my uncle, wishes to marry my sister to some poor gentleman, with whom she will lead an indigent life, with nothing but the hope of a part of the inheritance of my mother. It is a great misfortune, lady, to lose one's fortune, but the degradation of blood is infinitely more great. My poor old father has only us two, and since fortune has robbed him of his possessions, and of a wife whom he loved as his own soul, suffer not rapacity to deprive him of his beloved daughter, in whose bosom he hoped to finish tranquilly the few last years of his old age. We have no friends in Naples, our relations are our enemies, and on account of the circumstances of my father's situation, every one fears to take us by the hand. *** Such is my sorrow, most excellent lady, that this letter is confused on

CHAP. III.

A. D. 1556.
Act. 12.

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Act. 12.

account of the tumults of my mind. But your ladyship will judge of a grief, which it is impossible for me to express." *

Notwithstanding these efforts, Bernardo, whose only means of subsistence was the quarterly payment of the pension of three hundred scudi from the prince of Salerno, could neither recover his daughter, nor the dowry. The latter, indeed, served as a subject of litigation for Torquato during his life. To these afflictions was joined at this time the death of John James Tasso, the father of Christopher, and one of the firmest friends who had remained to Bernardo. Amidst these calamities, he gave up for a while his larger work, which was now drawing near a close. He did not, however, abandon poetry, but composed, on the death of his wife, a canzone, and forty-nine sonnets, which, in the opinion of Serassi, do not yield much to the best of Petrarch on the death of Laura. These sonnets, written by a person, and on a subject extremely interesting to Torquato, were shown to him during their composition, and had the effect, without doubt, of nourishing that poetical spirit of which he had already given proofs. †

As Bernardo was now disengaged from matrimony, as he

* *Lettere*, vol. II. p. 203. One of the persons to whom Bernardo applied at this time, and in whose patronage he principally confided, was the English cardinal Pole. "Il quale," says he, "è molto mio signore."

† These sonnets begin at page 294. *Quegli occhi chiari*, &c., and end at page 318 of volume first of the *Rime di B. Tasso*, Bergamo 1749, in 12mo. See Appendix, No. II.

CHAP. III.

A. D. 1556.
Act, 12.

was in high favour with the nephews of the pope, and was besides of a restless disposition, he, about this time, resolved to enter into the church. He accordingly made application for a benefice to the king of France, writing for the same purpose to Margaret of Valois, on whom he had composed so many sonnets. Bernardo, as usual, failed of success in his applications, and a circumstance soon happened, which interrupted his putting on the ecclesiastical habit. Paul IV. being of a violent and arrogant temper, had compelled Philip II. of Spain, however disposed to venerate the pontifical authority, to give orders to the duke of Alva, (then viceroy of Naples,) to take the field against his holiness. Accordingly, the duke, at the head of above twelve thousand veterans, commanded chiefly by Roman barons, whom the violence of the pope had driven into exile, entered the *Campagna di Roma*, and took Ponte Corvo, Frosinone, and all the most important places of the Papal territory. These towns, Alva professed he took possession of in name of the college of cardinals, and of the future pope; to whom, he affirmed, they would be immediately restored. *

The rapid approach of the Spanish army, the light troops of which made inroads to the very gates of Rome, filled that city with consternation. Bernardo, who saw that little provision was made for its defence, considering too, that he himself was peculiarly obnoxious to the imperialists, and dreading scenes such as had taken place under Clement VII.

† Robertson's *Charles V.* vol. IV. 250.

CHAP. III.

A. D. 1556.
Act. 12.Bernardo sends
Torquato to
Bergamo, and
leaves Rome.

resolved to quit the city as quickly as possible. Preparatory to this, he determined to send Torquato and Christopher to Bergamo, under the guidance of John D'Angeluzzo, the faithful and venerable priest of whom I have already made mention. They departed about the tenth of September 1556. Bernardo remained a few days longer in Rome, but, upon a rumour of the immediate approach of the Spanish army, he hurried to Ravenna, with only two shirts and his *Amadigi*. He was now resolved to retire to Venice with his son, as soon as the plague should have ceased, which at this time ravaged that city. *

Settles at Pe-
saro.

Fortunately, however, for Bernardo, Guidubaldo II. duke of Urbino, hearing that he was in the neighbourhood, invited him in a most courteous manner to Pesaro, offering for his habitation a delightful house, extremely fit, says Bernardo, for inspiring a poet. Here, relieved in a great degree from anxiety, he had an opportunity of completing, and of revising his work. He was the more favourably situated in this respect, as there were many brave and learned gentlemen about the court of the duke, with whom he could communicate his doubts, as well on the subject of poetry as of chivalry. Meanwhile, he heard of the safe arrival of Torquato at Bergamo. The young poet was now twelve years and a half old, and being handsome and well educated, he was, on account of his own merit, of the family connection, and especially of the reputation of his father, extremely caressed. This we learn from the epistles of Bernardo, se-

* *Lettere*, vol. III. p. 118.

veral of which are letters of thanks to different people who had taken much notice of his son. He lived with the lady Tasso, mother of Christopher, his school-fellow, and received peculiar kindness from her and her family.

CHAP. III.

A. D. 1556.
Act. 12.

After Torquato had resided a few months at Bergamo, where he continued applying eagerly to his studies ; Bernardo, unwilling, on the one hand, that he should be any burden to his relations, and, on the other, languishing for the company of his son, wrote repeatedly to the Cavaliere de' Tassi, to send him to Pesaro. That lady and her family loved Torquato much, and were very unwilling that he should depart so soon ; an attention which made much impression on the grateful mind of Bernardo. In the beginning of April 1557, the young Tasso arrived at Pesaro, where he was received by his father with infinite joy. He had now completed his thirteenth year, and the duke of Urbino seeing him a polite, ingenious, and learned boy, resolved to make him the companion in studies of his son Francesco Maria. This young man, who was afterwards a learned and valiant prince, conceived a high esteem and friendship for Torquato, as we learn from a letter to Paul Beni, who had sent him a copy of his commentary on the *Jerusalem Delivered*. “ Though I see always (says the prince) with much satisfaction the fruits of your genius, and erudition, I will read the compositions you have now sent me with peculiar pleasure, as they relate to the *Jerusalem Delivered* of Tasso. For besides the honour due to that most noble poem, I had always a singular esteem for its author, and loved him

And sends for
Torquato.1557.
Act. 13.

CHAP. III.

A. D. 1557.
Act 13.

much from his own and my earliest years. He lived a considerable time in this house, and I may say was fostered with me ; so that you have afforded me the highest delight by employing your labours upon this work."

The tutor of the prince was Lodovico Corrado, a very learned man, well skilled, not only in Latin, but in Greek ; so that Torquato had an opportunity of making still greater progress, and probably of arriving at a considerable degree of perfection in that language. Nor did his fondness for learning make him neglect riding, fencing, and other accomplishments suited to a gentleman. At the same time, he applied to mathematics, under the celebrated Commandine, who being a native of Urbino, and unwilling to act as public professor in any university, resided privately at Pesaro, occasionally giving lessons to the noble youth, who frequented his house. The instructions which Torquato received from this excellent geometer, had no doubt a similar effect to what the same study had formerly on Virgil, and afterwards on Milton. It fortified those ideas of luminous order, and masterly arrangement, the principles of which he had already imbibed ; at a time, too, when the genius of Ariosto had given grace to disorder, and, unconfined in its influence by the Alps or the Ocean, was producing its baneful effects on the taste of one of the greatest, but most neglected of our poets. *

Torquato
studies mathe-
matics.

* The reader well knows that Spenser is here meant. That both Virgil and Milton had applied themselves to geometry, we learn from the respective lives of those poets.

CHAP. III

A. D. 1557,
Act. 13.1558.
Act. 14.

In the beginning of September 1557, Bernardo had finished his *Amadigi*; and in order to render it as correct as possible, he, by command of the duchess of Urbino, read a canto every day, in presence of her and the literary men, of whom there was at that time a considerable number in the court. So anxious was the duke about the perfection of this poem, that he sent for Dionigi Atanagi to Pesaro, for the sole purpose of reviewing and correcting it. A circumstance, however, happened at this time, which induced Bernardo to cast it again in several places, and injured considerably the design and beauty of the work. In April 1558, the duke of Urbino was appointed captain-general of his Catholic majesty, and imagining, as his favour was high, that he might obtain the pardon and recover the property of Bernardo, he insinuated to that poet, that it would be proper in him to detach himself from the French party, and dedicate his *Amadigi* to Philip II. Bernardo, besides his connection with the prince of Salerno, was both by principle and habit attached to the French; but the hope of recovering

“Sed Virgilius Cremonâ, Mediolanum, et inde paulò post Neapolim transit, ubi cùm literis et Græcis et Latinis vehementissimam operam dedisset, tandem omni cura, omnique studio, indulsit Medicinæ, et *Mathematicæ*.” *Donatus*.

Talking of his residence at Horton with his father, after leaving the university, Milton says, “Paterno rure, quo is transigendæ senectutis causâ concesserat, evolvendis Græcis Latinisque scriptoribus, summum per otium totus vacavi; ita tamen ut nunquam rus urbe mutarem; aut cœmendorum gratiâ librorum, aut novum quidpiam in *Mathematicis*, vel in *Musicis*, quibus tum oblectabar, addiscendi.”

Defens. Secund. Works, vol. V. p. 230.

At the time of his visiting Florence, Milton was induced, by his esteem for genius and science, to wait upon Galileo. It is probable, I may remark by the way, that the spectacle of that venerable victim of sacerdotal despotism, had a very considerable effect in kindling his indignant enthusiasm against intolerance.

CHAP. III.

A. D. 1558.
Act. 14.

his property, and the tediousness of patronage from the court of France, fixed his irresolution. He had been led to expect, that the king of France and Sanseverino would each of them bestow an hundred scudi to assist him in printing his poem. This, however, was not accomplished: his pension of three hundred scudi was likewise withdrawn; so that, in order to preserve himself from the most absolute indigence, it was necessary for him to listen to the counsel of the duke of Urbino. “It is a hard thing (says he in a letter to a friend) to have spent twenty-six years of the flower of my life in the service of this prince (Sanseverino); to have lost on his account my wife, my property, and my peace of mind; to have deprived my children of the inheritance of their mother; and to see myself in my old age reduced to such a condition, as to be under the necessity of almost begging my subsistence with my unfortunate son. . . . What more can I hope from the prince of Salerno, if, under the slightest pretences, he has withdrawn my pension of three hundred scudi; while he still continues it to another, who has deserved it less than I? . . . If the magnanimity of the duke of Urbino, and the courtesy of some friendly gentlemen had not assisted me, how could I have lived in this calamitous year, when even the rich can with difficulty support themselves? Ought I any longer, with a countenance red with shame, to go about soliciting this and that person; and to become the prey of usurers, in order that I may have mere subsistence?” *

* *Lettere*, vol. II. 382, 385. The prince of Salerno, after the death of Henry II. by whom he had been highly favoured and protected, finding that he was neglected

CHAP. III.

A. D. 1558.
Act. 14.Bernardo alters the *Amadigi*.

In compliance with his new intentions, it was necessary for Bernardo to begin the ungrateful task of altering his poem. He had resolved to dedicate it to the king of France Henry II., and the work was full of lines and episodes in praise of the members of that royal house, especially of his old subject of eulogy, Margaret of Valois. These were all to be cancelled. *Amadis*, who had been of the family of France, was now of the blood royal of Spain, and many other changes were made in the fable and digressions. Such, however, was the ardour of Bernardo, that his work was reformed in the course of a few months. The duke had written to the Catholic king in his favour, praising at the same time the *Amadigi*, which he informed him was to be published under his royal auspices. Bernardo resolved, therefore, to go immediately to Venice, to print his poem in a magnificent manner, in hopes, not only of great increase of reputation, but of much advantage to his private fortune. Accordingly, he departed with Atanagi, one of his principal critics, in December 1588, leaving Torquato at court attending to his studies. He had received, to assist him in printing his work, three hundred ducats from the duke of Urbino, and a hundred scudi of gold from the Cardinal de Tournon.

At Venice, Bernardo met with Lodovico Dolce, Ruscelli,

amidst the tumults which followed in France, went over to the Hugonots. After many vicissitudes, he died at Avignon, aged and poor, in the year 1568.

Summonte. lib. X. cap. 2.

CHAP. III.

A. D. 1558.
Act. 14.

Torquato re-
sides in Venice.

1559.
Act. 15.

Favourable
circumstances
in his educa-
tion.

Paulus Manutius, and other literary friends. He was received into the Venetian academy, (of which he was appointed secretary, with a respectable annual stipend,) and upon the whole, was so satisfied with his situation, that he resolved to withdraw for ever from the service of princes, and to close his life in Venice. He now, therefore, provided a good house in a pleasing situation, which he furnished well, and adorned, as usual, with valuable tapestry. Nothing now seemed wanting to his happiness but his Torquato, for whom he wrote, and who was dismissed with the favour and regrets of the duke and his son. The young Tasso arrived at Venice in the beginning of May 1559, after having resided two years partly at Urbino, and partly at Pesaro.

Nothing could be more conducive both to the general and poetical improvement of Torquato, than this successive residence, amidst the most beautiful rustic scenery, and in the most picturesque cities of Italy. His youthful companions, too, were the princes and nobles of the country, to associate with whom, he must have found it necessary to render himself distinguished by his talents, since never is merit better discerned, nor more sincerely honoured than among youthful compeers. Add to this, that his mind was stimulated to literature by the example of his father, and of his father's friends; and from his most early years, he had been led to associate poetry with glory, and glory with happiness. He was now an excellent classical scholar; and besides his skill in the two ancient languages, had paid particular attention to

the Italian writers, both in prose and verse. Before beginning to dispose, genius must in youth have employed itself to amass, since it is in vain that nature has given the faculty of combining, unless materials be supplied by observation and study. Thus the two great modern poets, Tasso and Milton, agree in their early and passionate thirst of reading ; * and as he who purposes to be a master, must first be a disciple, both of them chose the most illustrious models of their kind. The principal study of Tasso at this time was the two fathers of Italian poetry, Dante and Petrarch. These writers were also favourites of Milton, who honoured them for the sanctity of their thoughts, above every other poet who wrote of love. “ And above them all,” says he, “ preferred the two famous renowners of Beatrice and Laura, who never write but honour of them to whom they devote their verse, displaying sublime and pure thoughts without transgression.” † Tasso nourished his fancy and his understanding with their images and sentiments ; nor, as appears from many discussions in his works, was he less studious of the lower than of the higher branches of his art. He observed the choice of words, the structure and harmony of sentences, and made

* “ Pater, (says Milton, *Defensio secunda Works*, vol. V. p. 230.) me puerulum humaniorum literarum studiis destinavit ; quas ita avidè arripui, ut ab anno ætatis undecimo, vix unquam ante mediam noctem a lucubrationibus discederem, quæ prima oculorum perniciēs fuit.” “ Poetry, (as Cervantes elegantly remarks,) is like a tender virgin in her bloom, beautiful and charming to amazement ; all the other sciences are so many virgins, whose care it is to enrich, adorn, and wait upon her.” *Don Quixotte*, part 2. chap. 16.

† *Works*, I. 224.

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minute and subtle remarks on the elements which compose a sweet and a majestic stile. There still remains a copy of Petrarch, and one of Dante, noted by the hand of Torquato: but the best proof of his attention to these writers, is the adoption of their thoughts and phraseology in many places of his works. We are altogether ignorant of what assistance was derived by Homer from antecedent writers; but that this was considerable, appears certain, as he was accused of having pillaged from earlier poets, whatever was most remarkable in his Iliad and Odyssey. With regard to the three other epic writers, they seem to have searched almost every poem, (as well as universal nature,) for beauties to transplant into their own. Bernardo, though his son was at no time a good, and latterly a very bad penman, * employed him not only to transcribe passages of his *Amadigi*, but also some *Rime*, and a second volume of his letters, which he now gave to the press. This exercise, and those studies, furnished the youthful poet with innumerable graces of elocution, and en-

* The manuscripts of Torquato which remain, abound in erasures, and are almost illegible. "Gli originali," says Tiraboschi, "di molte delle opere del Tasso si conservano in questa Biblioteca Estense, e vi si veggon le molte cancellature con cui egli ritoccava e ripuliva i suoi scritti, che sono di un carattere pessimo e appena intelligibile."

Storia della Poesia Ital. vol. III. 245. Edit. Mathias.

Torquato sending some of the cantos of his great poem to Scipio Gonzaga, October 1. 1576, entreats him to show them to nobody, on account of the miserable writing, erasures, and "errori di penna," by which I suppose he means bad spelling. "Pur mi consola," continues he, "l'aver letto che Plotino, del quale nissun mai più dotto, o eloquente uscì dalle scuole Platoniche, scriveva scorretissimamente, e non sapea alcuna regola d'ortografia." *Oper.* vol. X. p. 122.

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Act. 15.Marriage of
Cornelia Tasso.

abled him afterwards to adorn his poetical creations with vestments suited to their transcendent beauty.

We have for some time past had the happiness not to be under the necessity of recollecting the relations of Bernardo. In 1558, they had married his daughter Cornelia to Marzio Sersale, a Sorrentine gentleman of small estate, but of an ancient and noble family. As Bernardo had hoped some high marriage for this young woman, and especially to have established her in some place where he might enjoy her society, it was some time before his son-in-law gathered sufficient courage to write to him.* To his apology, Bernardo, who was of an affectionate and forgiving disposition, returned a courteous answer: "Your letter," says he, "was extremely welcome, nor do I know why you have been so long in fulfilling that duty. If I did not consent to your marriage, it was from no disapprobation of you, but from the wish that my daughter should be established in a situation where she might, by her company, afford me that consolation, which to an affectionate father it is so natural to desire. But since

* Among the letters of Bernardo, there is one of great beauty, addressed to his daughter when she was very young. In this, he exhorts her to pursue her studies, and promises to provide her a husband worthy of her, and who would live in his neighbourhood, or rather under the same roof. "A me," says he, "soave, e riposata sarà la vecchiezza, vedendo (come spero che Iddio ti conceda) eternarmi ne' tuoi figliuolini; e la mia effigie dipinta nel volto loro, e men noiosa mi parrà la morte, qualor, vedendoti in stato d'onore, e di quiete, con l'amor di tuo marito, con la contentezza de' tuoi figliuoli, mi chiuderai con le pallide mani questi occhi; certo d'aver gli ultimi baci, l'ultime lagrime, e ogni altro pietoso, e grato ufficio che da ubbidiente, e amorevole figliuola verso caro padre usar si dee." *Lettere*, vol. I. p. 114.

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Act. 15.

such has been the will of God, by whom all things are governed, his will is mine, and I shall consider you with the same degree of affection, as if I had voluntarily chosen you as my son. And though the conduct of Cornelia towards her brother and me, has not been altogether such as becomes an affectionate sister, and pious daughter, yet I forgive her all; and I grieve at the chastisement which it has pleased the Almighty and righteous Judge to inflict on her.”* This chastisement was the loss of her own and her husband’s effects, soon after their marriage, by the disembarkation of some Turkish corsairs at Sorrento. For some time, Bernardo believed that Cornelia had been taken prisoner, and it is impossible to express his horror, lest she should be sent to the seraglio of Solymán. “The news of her death,” says he in a letter, “would be agreeable compared with this, because I am certain, if she be taken, that such is her beauty, she will be presented to the Turk. I pray God, that I may not hear this news, for all my other misfortunes would be a trifle in comparison.”† It is possible that the Turks might not have had the same opinion of Cornelia’s beauty as Bernardo, but the problem is fortunately left indeterminate. In order to certify himself still farther of the situation of his daughter, he sent John d’Angeluzzo to Sorrento, from whom he received accounts with which he was highly satisfied. “The relation, (says he in a letter to his brother-in-law,) which I

* *Let.* Vol. II. p. 473. † Vol. II. p. 388.

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have had concerning Cornelia, has in a great degree tranquillized my mind. For though her husband is not so wealthy as I could wish, yet, besides being of noble birth, he has so many good qualities that I cannot complain. I can the less do so, as I learn that there exists between them such an union of love, and harmony of will, as would be sufficient, in the meanest condition, to render their lives peaceable and happy."† From this marriage several descendants have sprung, of considerable rank and merit, particularly Cardinal Antonio Sersale, who, during more than twenty years, in the course of last century, was invested with the high dignity of archbishop of Naples.

In the meantime, the affairs of Bernardo went on indifferently well at Madrid, being furthered, as he supposed, by Ruy Gomez prince of Evoli, by his old acquaintance the bishop of Arras, and by other powerful courtiers. It would have been easy to have procured a revocation of the sentence of banishment, but he wished also to obtain for his children the restitution of their mother's inheritance. He claimed likewise the compensation of three hundred scudi of perpetual rent, in place of the revenue that had been confiscated, and of his house, sold at Salerno, the purchase money of which had entered into the royal treasury. However, he was fed with promises; and at the same time, as a mean of advancing his views, was urged to publish his poem,

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the subject of which was interesting to the Spaniards, as it was taken from a romance, which at this period was the delight of that nation. Bernardo doubted not, that his children would be restored to their inheritance, and himself to all his privileges. He imagined that the king delayed merely till he might receive the poem, and that he did not chuse to grant his petition before that time, lest, upon dedicating and presenting the work to him, there might then be an expectation of some other donation.

Accordingly, Bernardo earnestly requested his friends, and particularly Sperone Speroni, to whom he sent a great number of sheets by Torquato, that they would attentively criticise and correct his work. Sperone devoted above two months to this object, and sent to Bernardo a number of criticisms, of the greater part of which he availed himself. He tells Sperone, in a letter, that he had already rejected more than two hundred stanzas, and that before he stops, he will probably cancel more than twice that number. At the same time, as the office of secretary to the academy consumed many of his hours, he gave it up on the first of March 1560; and as some of his literary friends were rather prodigal of their society, he changed to a situation where he might be less exposed to the visitations of those gentlemen.

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Torquato, in the mean time, was advancing with giant strides in the study of literature, had examined critically the works of the best Italian writers, and wrote with delicacy and eloquence, both in prose and verse. “Torquato, (says his father, in a letter written at this period) attends to his

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Act. 16.Torquato sent
to Padua to
study law.

studies, and, in his tender age, shows so much of the talents of his mother, that I have the firmest belief, that he will become a great man, provided I live, as I hope, till he can finish his education." * He had now completed his sixteenth year; and as his father knew, by experience, of how little avail the study of literature, and especially of poetry, is to obtain, not rank and riches, but even an honest independence, he resolved to send his son to Padua. There he wished him to study law, by which he observed that many persons of moderate, and even of mean capacity, had obtained great dignity, and immense possessions. He knew that skill in poetry is, in general, rewarded only with empty praise; a boon, too, bestowed unwillingly, and withheld commonly till the ear which it can gratify is deaf to its enjoyment. Accordingly, in the end of August 1560, he wrote to his friend Sperone, who at that time lived in Padua, requesting him to find some sober and decent family with whom Torquato might be pensioned. At the opening of the classes in the beginning of November 1560, the young poet went to that city, with sentiments, relative to his future study, similar perhaps to those of his favourites, Ovid and Petrarch. †

* *Let.* Vol. II. p. 482. See, as documents of the other circumstances in the text, vol. III. pp. 136, 138, 143, 148, 157, 149. Vol. II. p. 486.

† Nec me verbosas leges ediscere, nec me
Ingrato voces prostituisse foro:
Mortale est, quod quæris opus, mihi fama perennis
Quæritur, ut toto semper in orbe canar.

Ovid. *Amor.* I. xv. 5.

Petrarch was compelled by his father to study law during seven years, and strongly

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Publication of
the *Amadigi*.

The *Amadigi* being now finished, and corrected, Bernardo made an agreement with Gabriel Giolito, a Venetian printer, whose elegant typography must be well known to several of my readers. As he could not spare money sufficient for the expence of printing, he found it necessary to enter into a kind of partnership. He wished that the work should be ornamented with engravings; but as it consisted of an hundred cantos, Giolito would not consent to this great expence, but in other respects did it great justice, employing a fine paper, and elegant characters. On the tenth of July 1560, fifty cantos had been printed, and before the end of the year it was ushered to the light, furnished with an elegant preface by Lodovico Dolce. * Of his poem, Bernar-

expresses his aversion and disgust of this art, in the following letter to the celebrated Cino da Pistoja : “ Studium ad quod me hortaris, servile officium reputo, et mancipium omnibus se præstant qui illo utuntur; et si paterna non foret reverentia, si post me curreret, (quia libertate uti cupio) non acceptarem Quis est, qui non dicat, hæc jura venalia esse, et ad bene, recteque vivendum longe aliis studiis esse inferiora? Quid ad faciendum virum bonum ista conveniunt? sed quis non videt ad virtutem consequendam nihil pertinere? Sed cupidum magis, mendacem, iracundumque hominem reddunt. Quid mihi est *De aqua arcenda* disputare? Quid *De Scilicidio*. Quid *Si ancilla partus in fructibus censeatur*? Quid *si quis legata persolvi teneatur*? Quin etiam si testamentum septem testibus caruerit, executioni mandetur, cum ista a legum latoribus luculente explicata sint. Vos vestris commentationibus, omnia pervertitis; sunt commenta super commenta, quæ indies novi legulei scribunt, ut jam evenerit ex hoc id quod ait Comicus, ut intelligendo nihil intelligant.” *Tomasini Petrarca Redivivus*, p. 13. Ed. 1650, in 4to.

* The following is the title of this work. *L'Amadigi del Signor Bernardo Tasso. All' Invittissimo e Cattolico Re Filippo. In Vinegia appresso Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari MDLX.* The work is in large 4to, and was printed twice by Giolito, under the same date, but the first edition is the most elegant. Of the first, there were a thousand two hundred, of the second two thousand copies. In 1583, it was printed in a wretched manner by Zopini, in little 4to; from which period it slept till a new edition was published by Serassi, at Bergamo, 1755, in four volumes 12mo.

do sent above a hundred and fifty copies, most of them bound, to different lords and dames celebrated in the work, but, except from the duke of Urbino, received, as he pathetically tells us, nothing but thanks and praise. The copy sent to Philip II. of Spain was not more successful; for, notwithstanding the dedication, and the real or pretended good offices of a number of personages of high rank, Bernardo, after hoping in vain for twelve months, again experienced the justness of the sentiment, which represents expecting nothing as one of the Beatitudes.

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Full little knowest thou, that hast not try'd,
 What hell it is in suing long to bide;
 To lose good dayes that might be better spent,
 To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
 To speed to day, to be put back to morrow,
 To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;
 To fret thy soule with crosses, and with cares;
 To eate thy heart through comfortlesse despair;
 To fawne, to crouche, to wait, to ride, to run,
 To spend, to give, to want, to be undone. *

Little indeed was to be expected from the execrable Philip, who is sometimes represented as a great patron of literature. Amongst other proofs, a person who knew not the circumstances, might perhaps be led to adduce the dedication of the *Amadigi*. The indifference of Charles V. communicated to his successors, has perhaps been one of the principal causes of the long degradation of the subjects of

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the Austrian family. Those of Francis I., on the other hand, following his example, refined, in general, and polished their people, and have secured to themselves an eternal place in the temple of Renown.

Causes of the
bad success of
the *Amadigi*.

It is not my design, after having been occupied so long with Bernardo, and considering the length and variety of the path before us, to detain my reader with a minute and critical account of the *Amadigi*. It fulfilled neither the hopes of the author, nor the expectation of his readers; and, with a number of romantic poems written by distinguished authors of that period, has sunk into a slumber, from which it is not probable it will ever be awakened. It was begun at the solicitation of some of the members of the Spanish court, and their request was complied with by the author, with a docility which was a better proof of his courtesy than his judgment. In fact, from the nature of the case, Bernardo must at that time have failed of success, had he possessed all the ease of Ariosto, and all the grandeur of his own illustrious son. The romance of *Amadis*, written in prose by Vasco Lobeira, a Portuguese knight, who died in the year 1403, was translated into Spanish, (and, as the translator asserts, considerably corrected, polished, and amended,) by Garcia Ordognez de Montalvo, Regidor of Medina del Campo.* As it was among the earliest, it

* There is a dispute whether Lobeira was the original author of *Amadis*, or whether he took it, as was usual with the prose writers of romance, from the metrical compositions of some minstrel. (See Edinburgh Review, October 1803, p. 110.) The opinion of the writer of that article receives considerable confirmation from the following passage

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was considered as the most interesting of those performances; it was so esteemed by Cervantes, who, besides having read a great number of such compositions, was extremely well qualified to judge. When the scrutinizing curate committed to the flames the library of the knight of la Mancha, three romances were spared from the common doom: *Tirante the White*, for its quaintness; *Palmeirim of England*, partly on account of its merit, and partly because it was reported by some to have been written by a king of Portugal; *Amadis of Gaul*, because it was the first of the kind, and the best.

The victories of Charles V. and the vast power of the Spanish nation, diffused a knowledge of the Castilian language over the Continent of Europe; so that the incidents in the romance of *Amadis*, as we learn from Bernardo himself, were so notorious, “that few in Italy, or in the principal courts of the Christian princes, were not acquainted with them.” Even among people of the lower ranks the story was popular; for we are told, that when the Spaniards first saw Mexico, they said to one another that it resembled the places of enchantment spoken of in the book of *Amadis*. * Besides, it was at a very early period translated into the French and Italian languages. Such being the case, it was as ill judg-

of a letter of Bernardo Tasso, who it is probable had taken some pains to investigate the subject. The letter is addressed to Jerome Ruscelli, and is dated May 1558. “*Non è dubbio*, giudiciosissimo Sig. Girolamo mio, che lo scrittore di questa leggiadra e vaga invenzione, l’ha in parte cavata da qualche istoria di Bertagna; e poi abbelitola, e rendutala a quella vaghezza che il mondo così diletta.” Vol. II. p. 429.

* Southey, *Preface to Amadis of Gaul*, p. xxxii.

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ed in Bernardo to chuse the fable of *Amadis* for the subject of his work, as it would be in a modern to versify the *Telemaque*, or even to convert into poetry any well-known historical events. Not an incident could be altered without danger; and besides, when a work attains a certain degree of merit, it fastens itself on the imagination, and every change which is made appears a defect. No one is ignorant of the fate of amendments on well-known dramatic compositions; nor is this ill success to be attributed merely to the want of merit in such amendments, but in a high degree to the nature of the thing.*

These reflections will account for a very unpleasant circumstance, which, we are told by Torquato, happened to Bernardo. “When my father,” says he, “was at the court of Spain, on the service of the prince of Salerno, he was persuaded by some of the chief personages there, to convert the romance of *Amadis* into poetry. No fable of that kind, in my judgment, and in that of many, is so beautiful and delightful; for with regard to passions and manners, it leaves all others behind it, while, in its variety of incidents, it yields to none written before or since. Having complied with this

* Besides modelling the incidents of the romance as suited his poetical notions, Bernardo, when the original names seemed harsh, altered the nomenclature. Thus he changed *Amadis* into *Amadigi*; *Agrajes* into *Agriante*; *Galvanes* into *Galvanesso*, &c. These objections, however, are relative; but the poem, though containing many beauties, has several absolute defects. The principal of these is the immense number of episodes, and the confusion and disorder which is thereby produced.

request, and being well acquainted with the rules, and especially with the Aristotelian rules of poetry, my father determined to frame a poem with a single action, and formed the fable on the despair of Amadis at the jealousy of Oriana, concluding his work with the battle between Lisuarte and Cildanano. He narrated, in episodes or digressions, the other principal incidents, and his design was such as could not be surpassed by the highest masters of the art. But at last, he was compelled to relinquish the claim of a judicious poet, in order not to lose that of a good courtier. He read some cantos to the prince his master, and when he began to read, the apartments were crowded with gentlemen eager to listen, all of whom before he ended had disappeared. From this circumstance he concluded, that unity of action in its nature yields little delight, since he could not accuse himself of having failed in one rule of art. He accordingly complied unwillingly with the commands of his prince, and laid aside those rules of art, which, though he considered them as essential, had met with so little success." * The true cause, however, of the failure of Bernardo was not his compliance with the rules of poetry, but his alteration of a work so notorious and celebrated as the romance of *Amadis*. The genius too, and glory of Ariosto, was fatal to the efforts of many of his contemporaries and successors ; as a gigan-

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Act. 16.* *Apologia Oper.* vol. II. p. 288.

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tic tree in the forest repels the sunshine, and attracts the nourishment from those which grow around it. *

* In Italian poetry, there are reckoned about sixty heroic poems, besides the *Orlando* and *Jerusalem*. Of these neglected works, many are the productions of men of very considerable talent, as Trissino, Alamanni, &c. This will give a high idea of the poetical abilities of the two who have preceded so far in a course where so many were contending for victory.

CHAPTER IV.

Remarks on the feudal system, and its moral effects.—On chivalry and its peculiar fitness for delineation by the poet.—Rise of romantic fiction, different accounts given of its origin, and arguments adduced for its derivation from classical mythology.—Of the Italian romantic poets.—State of heroic poetry in Italy at the birth of Torquato.—Admiration entertained for Ariosto.—Advantages of education enjoyed by Tasso.

A. D. * — *

AET. *

As we are now approaching the period when Tasso began his poetical career, by the publication of the poem of *Rinaldo*, it will not, perhaps, be improper to say something of the nature of chivalry, and the origin of romantic fiction. The first of these topics has been largely treated of by some illustrious, and the last by several able writers. From these

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I shall select, as briefly as possible, the remarks which seem best fitted to illustrate the subject, and mix them with such observations as may occur to myself. *

Feudal system.

When the barbarous tribes over-ran the different provinces of the Roman Empire, the lands (distributed by *lot*, were thence called *Allodial*, and) were held in entire dominion by each proprietor, without any other obligation, than that of, on great occasions, defending the community. New tribes succeeded to the first, and subduing large tracks of country, many individuals occupied large landed estates. The king, or chieftain who had led them to conquest, naturally acquired the largest portion of territory. These lands, he found it convenient to parcel out to his principal followers, subjecting them to certain aids, and military services. His example was imitated by his courtiers, who distributed, under similar conditions, portions of their estates to their dependants. A feudal kingdom was thus a military establishment, and had the appearance of a victorious army, subordinate to command, and encamped under its officers in

* The middle ages, and those which immediately preceded the revival of letters, are in the highest degree interesting, and have been treated by pedants with infinitely too much contempt. In fact, we owe them much more, than to the Greeks and Romans. The direction of the mariner's compass, paper, printing, gunpowder, windmills, glass, &c. have been at least as useful to mankind as the Ergotisms of Aristotle, or the bad reasonings of Plato. What species of architecture interests so strongly as the gothic, the fancy, and the heart? The refinement of modern manners, the acquisition of many delicate, and many dignified sentiments, has been traced in a considerable degree to the institutions of the middle ages; and their manners and adventures, furnished the poet with new images and descriptions, superior in interest to those derived from what are called the heroic ages of antiquity.

different parts of the country. Amidst the turbulence and disorder of the middle ages, the allodial possessor found it convenient, both for personal safety, and the protection of his property, to subject his estate to the feudal services, and become the vassal of some great military baron.

The country was thus portioned out amongst a number of warlike chieftains, all of them considering themselves as independent of the sovereign, except during a period of national war. Possessed of large territories, and residing at a distance from the capital, they erected strong and gloomy fortresses in places of difficult access; and not only oppressed the people, and slighted the civil magistrate, but were often in a condition to set the authority of the crown itself at defiance. As the tenure by which the lands were held was military, as there was no art or science to occupy the mind, every landed proprietor was a soldier, and being expert and strong by the daily use of arms, was eager for an opportunity of shewing his prowess. This was never wanting; for when not employed in some expedition against a public enemy, he was commonly engaged in some petty enterprise, prompted by avarice, idleness, or revenge. Animosities and feuds were continually rising among the neighbouring barons, and as lives were often lost in these combats, disputes were rendered hereditary, and the son succeeded to the quarrels, as well as to the estate of his ancestor.

Its effects.

In these private battles only a few were engaged at a time, so that the prowess of a single combatant became

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conspicuous, and had a considerable influence on the fortune of the day. Those who chiefly distinguished themselves were the barons, and principal persons, who had a great advantage over the common people, by fighting on horseback clothed in armour, by the superiority of their weapons, and by the dexterity and skill which they had acquired by constant exercise. In these combats, the same individuals were frequently, at different times, and probably with different success, led to encounter each other; their emulation and animosity were thereby increased; they singled out each other in the field, and mutual challenges were given to a comparative trial of skill, courage, or address.

The judicial
combat.

From these challenges, and private encounters, arose the practice of duelling, and of the judicial combat. When a dispute arose between two barons in some civil court, upon any matter of property, the parties, who in such cases were not distinguished either for politeness to their adversaries, or attention to the judge, generally disagreed about facts, and affronted, or *gave one another the lye*. This, which still continues to be the principal offence for which *satisfaction* is required, induced them to appeal to the sword; and the civil magistrate, finding himself unable to restrain them, and wishing at the same time not to lose all shadow of authority, contented himself with superintending the ceremonies, and with regulating the forms of the encounter. There exists, too, in the human breast, a certain kind of retributive principle, which renders it natural to believe that the Almighty and Omniscient Being will vindicate innocence, and punish

guilt. The impatience of mankind, however, leads them to imagine that the intervention ought to take place even in this world, and that a solemn appeal to heaven must needs be followed by the discovery of its will. This opinion was rendered peculiarly strong in those times by the clergy, whose temporal policy it was to represent the Divine Power as dispensing with the laws of nature on the most frivolous occasions, where their interest was concerned. "One superstition prepared the way for another; and whoever believed that the Supreme Being had interposed miraculously on those trivial occasions mentioned in legends, could not but expect his intervention in matters of greater importance, when solemnly referred to his decision." *

Even the prejudices of men, however, are not wholly prejudices. The belief of the visible interposition of the Supreme Power was not altogether without foundation. Many effects are naturally produced by moral causes; "a sinful heart makes feeble hand;" † and, things in other respects being equal, it is not improbable, that innocence would generally triumph. This custom of duelling, and the peculiar notions of honour which now arose, were unknown in former times. "In those ancient states, (says Mr Millar,) that were most addicted to war, as in Rome and Sparta, the people were early brought under the authority of government, so as ef-

* Robertson's *Charles V.* vol. I. p. 61.

† *Marmion*, Can. VI. St. 31.

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After which, they were entertained at the

——— marshal'd feast
Serv'd up in hall, with sewers, and seneschals. *

Superstition of
the knights.

The knight was thus, by the nature of his education, distinguished for strength, courtesy, and valour; nor in these days, when the ascendancy of the church was all powerful, was he less remarkable for his warm and superstitious devotion. The pomp and circumstance of the Roman Catholic worship, its relics and its miracles, made a strong and irresistible impression on the fancy and the heart. There was, besides, little demand for virtue and good works; and the knight might gratify, without remorse, all his amorous or irreligious passions, provided he believed in certain dogmas, complied with certain pilgrimages or penances, and especially did not neglect to present his tythes and oblations to the church.

One circumstance remains to be accounted for, and that is, the romantic love and gallantry by which the age of chivalry was distinguished. † There are two appetites which,

Their proneness to love.

* *P. Lost*, IX. 36.

† It hath been through all ages ever seen
That with the praise of arms, and chivalry,
The prize of beauty still hath joined been,
And that for reasons special privity:
For either doth on other much rely;
For he, me seems, most fit the fair to serve,
That can her best defend from villany;
And she most fit his service doth deserve,
That fairest is, and from her faith will never swerve.

Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, Book IV. Can. V. St. 1.

for wise purposes, the Author of Nature has implanted in sentient beings, the appetite for food, and that of the sexes. The first, being necessary for individual preservation, is strongest and most necessary; and wherever, as among the savages of North America, its gratification was uncertain and imperfect, the sexual appetite was weak, and the degraded female was held in small esteem. On the other hand, where the comforts of life were abundant, as in Otaheite, no restraint was laid upon sexual indulgence, and individual love was lost in general voluptuousness.

This is, in some degree, a picture of what takes place in the progress of society, with regard to those sentiments and affections, which, though ultimately founded on appetite, are refined into the elegant passion of love, and have a considerable influence in the exaltation of our nature. In a state of poverty and indigence, the mind loses its sensibility to beauty; and besides, the female cannot acquire those graces and embellishments which fascinate the imagination. On the other hand, when wealth and luxury have increased to a great height, dissipation is produced, and the heart loses its tone by indulgence in sensual gratifications. Besides, as the youth are in the daily habit of seeing almost all the beauties of the country, the heart does not easily fix on one, and strong and fervent love gives place to frivolous and general gallantry.

It appears then, that the state of society most favourable to the passion of love, is one like that in the middle ages, equally removed from the extremes of indigence and of

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luxury. It is a passion, too, which is nourished in a high degree by obstacles; and these occurring frequently at that period, inflamed it to a fever, of which there are few that can now form a conception. The virgins were not then led in troops to public assemblies, but lived in retirement, in stately castles, surrounded often by romantic woods. The sight of a beauty was, from her seclusion, rare, and made an almost infallible impression on a vigorous and uncorrupted heart. At no period too, were higher ideas conceived, either of individual dignity, or of family importance; so that a lady would not stoop to give encouragement to a lover who was not distinguished by rank and prowess. Even in such cases, she was haughty and reserved, often insolent and scornful. Add to this, that by frequent feuds and family hostilities, a knight might often accidentally become enamoured of a lady of some house at variance with his own. These and other circumstances, by interposing obstacles which were difficult to be surmounted, fixed on some object, and exalted the imagination, and love became a species of warm, and almost frenzied devotion. *

* No one of the ancient Greek or Latin poets has written on the subject of love, with the same delicacy of sentiment as exists in the following song. It was composed in the beginning of the 13th century by Thibaut IV. earl of Champagne, and king of Navarre.

Las ! si j'avois pouvoir d'oublier
 Sa beauté, son bien dire,
 Et son très-doux regarder,
 Ferois mon martyre.

With his sensibilities thus awakened, alive to honour, and eager to distinguish himself in the eyes of the world, and of his mistress, the knight often sallied forth in search of adventures, when domestic cares did not furnish sufficient exercise for his activity and courage. Amidst the disorder and anarchy of those times, there was much insolence to be repressed, and much distress to be succoured. It was the duty and object of the errant knight to punish the injuries, and redress the grievances of the feeble and oppressed ; provided the oppressed persons were people of distinction. The female sex had a peculiar claim to his protection ; and many distressed damsels (we are told) were defended, rescued, or avenged. In short, there was an obligation on whoever had

Knights errant.

Mais las ! mon coeur Je n'en puis ôter ;
 Et grand affilage
 M'est d'espérer ;
 Mais tel servage
 Donne courage
 A tout endurer.

Et puis comment oublier
 Sa beauté, son bien dire ;
 Et son très doux regarder !
 Mieux aime mon martyre.

“ Les Anciens,” says the Abbé de Sade, speaking of the manner in which Petrarch treated love, “ ne connoissoient pas ce langage du cœur si delicat et si pur. Dans les beaux siècles de l’ancienne Rome, les Poetes n’entretenoient leurs maitresses que des faveurs qu’ils desiroient, ou de celles qu’ils avoient reçues.”

Vie de Petrarque, Pref. p. C.

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been dignified with the high honour of knighthood, to be a mirror of valour, devotion, courtesy, justice, generosity, and honour. His reward was love, his means of attaining it glory. Thus, when the "squier of lowe degré," becomes enamoured of the "king's daughter of Hungré," she addresses him, in the old romance, as follows :

For, and ye my love should wynne,
 With chyvalry ye must begynne,
 And ryde through many a peryllous place
 As a venterous man to seke your grace ;
 Over hylles and dales, and hye mountaines,
 In wethers wete, both hayle and raynes,
 And yf ye may no harbroughe sé,
 Than must ye lodge under a tré,
 Among the beastes wyld, and tame,
 And ever you wyll gette your name. *

Romance.

The records of the exploits and adventures of these enterprising knights was called romance, from the circumstance of their being sung by the minstrels, in the vulgar or corrupted Roman language. † Never did a mode of life produce characters equally energetic, and manners equally

* Ritson's *Ancient English Metrical Romances*, vol. III. p. 152.

† "It is generally admitted, (says Mr Ellis,) that the word *Romance* was first employed to signify the Roman language, as spoken in the European provinces of the empire; and that, in its most extensive sense, it comprised all the dialects of which the basis was the vulgar Latin, whatever might be the other materials which entered into their construction. The name was, therefore, equally applicable to the Italian, the Spanish, and French; and was sometimes, though incorrectly, applied to the vulgar languages of other countries; but the earliest and most familiar use of the word in this island, was to express that dialect of the French which had been introduced among us by the Norman conquest. It was afterwards, by an easy transition, employed to signify indiscrimi-

striking as those of chivalry, never did it offer to the poet, subjects equally glowing to the fancy, interesting to curiosity, and affecting to the heart. If we consider, first, the *scenery* in which the actors were placed, what could be more picturesque than those frowning castles, those majestic cathedrals, those magnificent abbeys? The habitations of the people, indeed, were hovels, their situation humble and degraded, their manners rude or mean; but this gave only a bolder relief to those who were in the higher ranks of society. With regard to their *costume*, never did man conceive himself of so much individual importance, nor testify his pride and ostentation by such splendour of array, such pomp of attendance, or such solemnity of ceremonial. Contemplated in a *moral view*, that mixture of generosity and barbarity, of fierceness and gallantry, of superstition and enthusiasm; that refined polish observed even to the greatest enemy; that generous valour with which they exposed themselves to hazards; have all a tendency powerfully to affect the imagination. Add to this, the number of those hazards, the variety of adventures, which, from the state of society, the knight was likely to encounter; add, too, the fabulous

nately all such works as were composed in that dialect; and lastly, in consequence of the growing fondness of our Norman ancestors for tales of chivalry, became exclusively appropriated to this species of composition."—*Introduction to Specimens of early English Metrical Romances*, p. 2.

The reader will find long illustrations of the above note in Ritson's *Ancient English Metrical Romances*, vol. I. There are some very good remarks on this subject, in a dialogue of Sperone Speroni, *Dell' Historia*. Parte seconda.

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natural foes, which a mind, unacquainted with the constitution of things, and the *supernatural* ones, which a superstitious fancy might conjure up to itself, and we shall own, that never were richer subjects of delineation presented to the pencil of the poet. *

Hypotheses relative to the rise of romantic fiction.

The records, I have said, of the adventures and prowess of these warlike knights were called Romances. These Romances were adorned with many fabulous embellishments; and different hypotheses have been formed to account for the introduction and nature of these supernatural ornaments. Mr Warton attributes to the Saracens the origin of those splendid fablings, to which we give the name of romantic fiction. We know, indeed, that the science of modern Europe is considerably indebted to the Saracens; nor is it probable, that literature owes them nothing. It does not seem, however, to be proved, ~~that~~ its obligations are very great; and, as the science of the Arabians was derived from the Greeks, it is not improbable, that many of their fictions also, had their source in the writings of Homer, the fountain from which the streams of poetry, which have gladdened every land, have principally flowed.

A second hypothesis has been supported by the bishop of Dromore, † that romantic fiction was principally derived from the tales or sagas of the northern bards. These sagas,

* What service was rendered to poetry by chivalry, will appear from a beautiful passage of Chamfort, which, from its length, I have placed in the Appendix, (No. III.)

† *Reliques*, vol. III. p. 11. &c. See also Mallet, *Introduction a l'Histoire de Dannemarck*.

however, are now asserted by antiquarians to be generally modern and spurious; and the Edda itself, if not a complete forgery, is a work, it is said, of no great antiquity. Its pretended author Snorro, (which, as Ritson observes, is no bad name for a dreamer,) compiled, or, according to the same writer, fabled it in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, and manifestly long after the introduction of Christianity into the north. * Both the Arabic and Gothic systems, however, seem to be true to a certain extent; though by no means to such a degree, or so exclusively, as their respective champions have supposed.

Others again, (as Mr Leyden, in his *Introduction to the Complaynte of Scotland*,) suppose Armorica or Brittany to be the native country of romantic fiction. All the European nations derived their romances of chivalry from the French, and all the French romances originated (with one or two exceptions) in the north of France. The more ancient romances of chivalry, too, have especially celebrated the heroes of Brittany, or those of Wales; from which, it is asserted, a large colony of Britons fled to Armorica, about the year 513, from the Saxon tyranny.

With regard, however, to the colouring, and machinery introduced into these fabulous narrations, (at least in the form in which they appear among the Italian writers,) whatever did not arise from the state of manners, and the creative power

Its probable
derivation
from classical
fiction.

* *Dissertation on Romance and Chivalry*, p. 30.

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of the imagination, may be attributed, I think, almost wholly to the classical tales of antiquity. The composers of romance seem not to have been ignorant of the works of several of the ancient Greek and Latin poets. The war of Troy was the subject of many popular poems; nor was there a single striking mythological idea, perhaps, which did not linger behind, and which was not modified by the peculiar manners of the times.

Men lykyn gestis for to here,
And *Romans* rede in divers manere,
Of *Alexandre* the conquerour,
Of *Julius Caesar* the emperour,
Of *Greece* and *Troy* the strong stryf,
Ther many a man lost his lyf.

Cursor Mundi apud Ritson, cv.

The expedition of Jason in search of the golden fleece, the golden apples of the Hesperides watched by a dragon, the king's daughter, who is an enchantress, and who delivers the hero, is so perfect a specimen of romantic fiction, that we are told by Quadrio, that it was considered by many as a Grecian romance of chivalry. * There is indeed, scarce-

* *Storia d'ogni poesia*, vol. IV. 453. From this was derived a northern romance, *Jason and Medea*; and about the year 1147, a chronicle history of the Britons and English was composed from *Jason, and the Atchievement of the Golden Fleece*, till the death of Henry I. Besides, at a similar step of the social progress, similar ideas and manners are prevalent among different nations. Hercules, Theseus, and Jason, were the knight-errants of the ancients; and Eschylus tells us, in his tragedy of the Seven before Thebes, that *Deities* and *Legends*, are as old as the siege of that city. Thus Poly-nices had on his shield a representation of himself in armour, led by the goddess Justice, with the legend, *I will re-establish thee*, &c. See a dissertation on this subject, by the Abbé Fraguier, *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions*, tome 3.

ly a fable in the poem of Ariosto, of which the elements may not be found in the fictions of the Greeks. In Andromeda, we have the prototype of distressed damsels on the point of being devoured by an ork or dragon, and delivered by a knight. Circe and Calypso, are the originals of Alcina and Armida ; and the flying horse of Bellerophon, appears to be the dam of the Hippogryf. A sentient tree is described in Virgil's tale of Polydorus ; enchanted armour is furnished by Vulcan, both to Achilles and Aeneas ; and a giant and his cave are exhibited in the story of Polyphemus. The head of Medusa is the obvious origin of the stupifying shield ; and the ring which renders invisible, is to be met with in the fable of Gyges. Camilla and Penthesilea might easily furnish the idea of Marfisa and Bradamante.

The exploits which the Italians have particularly employed themselves in embellishing, are those attributed to Charlemagne, and to the twelve paladins or princes of his palace.* The grand source of their information is derived from a

* It may be doubted, (says a writer in the *Monthly Magazine*, February 1800,) whether the romances concerning Charlemagne do in fact relate to this emperor. They ascribe to him a father named Pepin, who has four sons ; exploits in the forest of Ardenne ; wars against the Saxons ; the repulsion of the Saracens, in consequence of a victory at Poitiers ; the institution of an order of knighthood ; the deposition of a duke of Aquitaine ; an embassy from the pope ; and the gift of the sacred territory to the see of Rome. All these circumstances, as we learn from the Abbé Velley, are historically true of Charles Martel. The names are the more likely to have been confounded through the medium of an American dialect, as *neur* signifies great, (le mayne) and *marra* a mattock, *martel* in that language ; so that Charlemar would be the Brittanian name for both. Nor is it unlikely, when the renown of Charlemagne eclipsed that of Charles Martel, that the deeds of the one would be transferred to the other.

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work attributed to Turpin, or Tilpin, archbishop of Rheims, who died before the prince, whose history it is pretended he relates. This work was, in 1122, declared by papal authority to be genuine, and was probably composed in the preceding century. Several metrical French translations and paraphrases, were at an early period made from the Latin, and the barrenness of the original was enriched with supplementary manure. Thus fecundated, arose many stately forests, and blooming gardens, the theatres of adventure, or the abodes of delight. *

The authority of Turpin, when any thing peculiarly incredible is to be related, is frequently quoted by Luigi Pulci, in his *Morgante*, which he composed about the middle of the fifteenth century. This, as Crescimbeni thinks, was done merely in jest, and not from any acquaintance of Pulci with the pretended work of Turpin. As Pulci's work became celebrated, his illustrious followers, Boiardo and Ariosto, imitated him in the choice of heroes, and are equally ready, in their more remarkable narrations, to lay the *onus probandi* on the good archbishop.

* The original Latin, which is entitled, Joannis Turpini, *Historia de Vita Caroli magni et Rolandi*, was never printed separately. It is extant in *Germanicorum rerum quatuor chronographi &c. Francofurti*, 1566, fo. and in *Script German. edit. a Justo Reubero*, tom. I. p. 67. "John Tilpinus or Turpinus," says Gibbon, (vol. VI. p. 5. 4to.) "was archbishop of Rheims, A. D. 773. After the year 1000, this romance was composed in his name, by a monk of the borders of France and Spain; and such was the idea of ecclesiastical merit, that he describes himself as a fighting and drinking priest! yet this book of lies was pronounced authentic by Pope Calixtus II. (A. D. 1122.) and is respectfully quoted by the Abbot Suger, in the great chronicles of St Denys, (*Fabric. Bibliot. Latin. mediæ ævi edit. Mansi*, tom. IV. p. 16.)"

There were two circumstances in which these three celebrated romantic writers agreed ; the first was, great want of unity of action, and confusion of incidents ; the second was, the custom of beginning every canto with some moral reflection, or introductory remark, usually suggested by the subject. Both these practices were adopted from the elder minstrels, who generally prefaced their miscellaneous compositions by an address to their hearers, or by some religious invocation. Of these preparatory addresses, we have some very pleasing examples in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

At the time when Torquato began his poetical career, there were two kinds of heroic poets in Italy,—the romantic and the classic. The first of these were numerous and distinguished ; Ariosto was at their head, and was admired to a degree bordering on idolatry. Of the others the leader was Trissino ; but the epic works of that writer, and of those who followed him, (as Alamanni, in his *Girone* and *Avarchide*,) were held in little estimation.* Bernardo seems to have had some idea of combining the advantages,

State of heroic poetry in Italy when Tasso began his *Rinaldo*.

* Bernardo, in his letters, vol. II. p. 425, after speaking of the great rapture with which Ariosto was read, contrasts this with the fate of those whom I have termed the classic, or epic writers. “ Non si vede all'incontro che'l Trissino, la cui dottrina nella nostra età fu degna di maraviglia, il cui Poema non sarà alcuno ardito di negare che non sia disposto secondo i canonî delle leggi d' Aristotile, e con la intera imitazione d' Omero, che non sia pieno d'erudizione, e atto ad insegnar di molte belle cose ; non è letto, e che quasi il giorno medesimo ch'è uscito in luce, è stato sepolto ? E se di ciò darete la colpa al verso senza rima (il che in alcuna parte tengo per fermo che ne sia stato cagione) vedete il *Girone* di quello eruditissimo e nobiliss. Gentiluomo (Alamanni) il quale se del tutto non è composto ad imitazione de' migliori Poeti, ha però quelli ancora imitati in molte parti e nulladimeno non diletta.... Già sono assuefatti, i gusti degli uomini che si vivono a questa nova forma di Poesia, la quale per la sua varietà oltra modo diletta ;

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while he shunned the defects of both these classes of writers ; of uniting classic regularity, with knightly adventure, and Gothic grandeur. His notions, however, do not seem to have been very definite ; the subject he chose was an unhappy one, and his genius was not sufficiently powerful. The current of public admiration, too, ran so strongly in favour of Ariosto, that (as appears from the quotations below,) Bernardo seems to have been borne away, and confesses that nothing but the irregular romance had any chance of being acceptable to the public. Torquato, however, was unseduced and unterrified ; he meditated early and deeply on the subject of epic poetry, and, kindling as he mused, formed the project of rivalling, or perhaps of dethroning Ariosto.

Reputation of
Ariosto.

In order to estimate his courage and abilities, let us consider the glory of that poet from whom he was to tear the sceptre of Parnassus. Torquato tells us himself, in very striking language, that the bard of Ferrara was repeatedly perused “ by every age and sex, and in every tongue. He pleases (says he) every body, is praised by every body ; he

sicchè null’ altra forma più lor piace.” Speaking of this subject again, at page 194. of the same volume, he says, “ Senza dubbio alcuno assai più diletta questa nova maniera di scriver de’ Romanzi, che quella antica non farebbe ; forse è meglio, ad imitazione di questi scrivendo, diletta, che di quelli, i lettori saziare, e fastidire. Già sono assuefatti gli orecchi, e’l gusto degli uomini del nostro secolo a questo novo modo di poesia di sorte, che niuna altra maniera di scrivere gli può diletta....A me pare che sia grandissima prudenza del Poeta il sapersi accomodare all’uso del secolo nel quale scrive, p. 325. See too *Opere di Tasso*, vol. V. p. 502. I have (p. 40.) attributed to Bernardo too much influence over the poetical notions of his son, and have said too generally, that the creed of Torquato on such subjects resembled that of his father. As far as *method* is concerned, this is only true of Bernardo’s original creed, (p. 10.) but from this true faith, the genius of Ariosto, and the prejudices of the public, had led him to apostatize.

lives in ever-renovating youth, and soars triumphant amidst the tongues of mortals.”* The letters, too, of Bernardo Tasso, abound in notices of the enthusiastic admiration entertained for this illustrious poet. “Do you not hear,” says he, in one of them dated from Venice, “do you not hear every day the passengers in the street, the sailors in their boats, the youthful virgins in their chambers, singing for their disport the stanzas of Ariosto?”† And in another, dated from the same city, there is the following passage: “I know not but if Aristotle were born in this age, and could read the delightful poem of Ariosto, if he could observe what rapture it universally inspires, I know not but he would change his opinion, and consent that an heroic poem may be composed of many actions. His wonderful learning and judgment would lead him, perhaps, to hold up a different model from what he has done, and to prescribe new laws. For if the end which a good poet ought to propose be instruction and delight, it is easily seen that both these ends have been in a supreme degree attained by Ariosto. There is neither learned man nor artizan, no youth, no maid, no old man, who can be satisfied with a single perusal of his poem. Are not his stanzas the solace of the weary traveller, who deceives, by singing them, the tediousness of the way?”

* E letto e riletto da tutte l'età, da tutti i sessi, noto a tutte le lingue, piace a tutti, tutti il lodano, vive e ringiovanisce sempre nella sua fama, e vola glorioso per le lingue de' mortali. *Oper.* vol. V. p. 502.

† Vol. II. p. 453.

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Hear you not how every day they are sung, and by every person, in the streets, and in the fields?" *

Advantages enjoyed by Torquato.

Such was the reputation of the poet with whom the young Torquato was to contend. To do this, not only a mighty genius, but a concurrence of diligence and fortune was necessary. In some respects, indeed, Torquato, as we have seen, enjoyed very singular advantages. He was born in an age when the taste for poetry was so strong, that even logicians near the age of forty began, not merely to write verses, but to compose heroic poems. † The example of his father, perhaps the most illustrious poet of his time, was continually before his eyes ; he saw him employed in these studies, not merely as a consolation amidst calamities, but as a re-establishment of his fortune. The whole correspondence of Bernardo, his whole intercourse with his friends, related, during the youth of his son, to the subject of poetry. Born amidst the most beautiful scenery of nature, Torquato, with a genius peculiarly precocious, and developed by misfortune, was removed at the age of ten to Rome, so interesting to the imagination, and so abundant in the arts. Educated in a court, when chivalry was not quite at an end, his genius was

* Vol. II. p. 425.

† This was the case with *Giraldi*, author of *Ercole*, who, in a letter to Bernardo, thus writes : " Io occupato ne' miei primi anni, insino al 38, negli studj di logica, e di filosofia, tardi, e poco meno che vecchio, sono entrato, come forestiero, a coglier frutti ne' campi delle muse." The worthy author, if he begun late, was resolved to continue long ; for he says, " Saranno i canti miei *quaranta otto*." *Lett. di B. Tasso*, vol. II. p. 208. 260.

enriched, and his soul ennobled ; the mind yet believed in some degree the wonders that it sung ; nor was the palace of Pesaro unworthy of being placed amidst the forests of Romance. At Venice his fancy must have been peculiarly affected with the spectacle of this singular city, and he would behold those oriental figures, that *costume*, and those manners, which he has so happily delineated. Here, too, it is probable, (since the letters just quoted from Bernardo were written at this very period) it is probable, that here he first imbibed that emulation of Ariosto, which he tells us would not suffer him to sleep. His future residence at Ferrara, and the singular co-incidence of his situation with that of his rival, must have still farther nourished that emulation, and roused every energy of his soul. Such were some of the advantages enjoyed by Torquato, and we are soon to see by what exertions he, at the age of thirty, had finished the most delightful poem which has yet perhaps been given to the world.

CHAPTER V.

Torquato studies Law at Padua, but is disgusted with that employment.—Writes his Rinaldo.—Reflections on this poem.—Is permitted by his father to print it, and to abandon the study of law.—Resides at Bologna, and plans his Jerusalem.—Reflections on the Crusades, and on their peculiar fitness as a subject of poetical embellishment.—Torquato leaves Bologna and returns to Padua.—Visits his father at Mantua.—Writes at Padua his Discourses on Heroic Poetry.—Is received into the service of the Cardinal Lewis of Este.

A. D. 1560 — 1565.

ÆT. 16 — 21.

CHAP. V.

IN a former chapter it has been mentioned, that Torquato went to Padua in the beginning of November 1560, being aged sixteen years and a half.* As his father had experienced of how little effect the study of poetry, or the service of princes, was to the attainment of independence, he

wished him to compensate the loss of patrimony by engaging in some lucrative but learned profession. The study of law has always been much followed in Italy, as there is much employment given to its professors in the different states of that country, and as it paves the way, not only to high civil, but to great ecclesiastical, honours. Much attention is paid in Italy to one great branch of law, the canon, or that which relates to ecclesiastical jurisprudence; a study which is comparatively little pursued in other countries. Accordingly, to law the greater number of young men of talents or family have applied themselves; and almost all the eminent poets of that country, as Petrarch, Ariosto, Marino, and in later times Metastasio, have been won by the muses from this pursuit. * Montesquieu had not yet ap-

* The verses in which Ariosto (in the sixth of his satires) bewails the time he had spent in the study of law, are extremely beautiful, and were probably often conned over by Torquato during the first year of his residence at Padua.

“ Ahi lasso, quando ebbi al Pegaseo melo
 L'età disposta, e che le fresche guancie
 Non si vedean ancor fiorir d'un pelo;
 Mio padre mi cacciò con spiedi, e lancie,
 (Non che con sproni) a volger testi, e chiose,
 E mi occupò cinqu' anni in quelle ciancie:
 Ma poichè vide poco fruttuose
 L'opre, ed il tempo in van gittarsi, dopo
 Molto contrasto, in libertà mi pose.”

Alas! when eager for the vocal string,
 In florid youth I tun'd my voice to sing;

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A. D. 1560.
Act. 16.

peared, and connected jurisprudence with philosophy, so that it must have seemed a mere collection of detached opinions, repulsive by its sterility to the poetical, and by its want of certainty, to the scientific mind. In general, indeed,

Long ere the tender down had yet began
To bloom upon my cheek, and promise man;
My father drove me from the pleasing toil,
"To con old deeds, and statutes disembroil."
But when he saw his over-rigid sway
In vain, five tedious years quite thrown away;
That I knew none, except poetic laws,
He dropp'd at last the long contested cause.

CROKER.

It was no doubt from a consideration of the intellectual hardships suffered by his favourite Italian poets in this matter, that Milton, in his fine poem to his father, thanks him for his forbearance.

"Nec raris ad leges, malè custoditaque gentis
Jura, nec insulsis damnas clamoribus aures;
Sed magis exultam cupiens ditescere mentem,
Me, procul urbano strepitu, recessibus altis
Abductum, Aoniæ jucunda per otia ripæ,
Phœbeo lateri comitem sinis ire beatum."

Ad Patrem, v. 71.

Nor did you force me, mid the bar's hoarse throng,
To gather riches from a nation's wrong:
To higher hopes you bade me lift my mind,
And leave the town, and civic din behind;
Mid sweet retreats, where streams Aonian glide,
You plac'd me happy by Apollo's side.

On all occasions, indeed, Milton speaks of the study of law with indignation or contempt. "Some allured to the *trade* of law, (says he in his *Tractate of Education*) grounding their purposes, not on the prudent and heavenly contemplation of justice and equity,

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the municipal laws of every country are a mass of opinions, not a collection of truths ; a farrago of regulations, adopted to meet the exigencies of the moment, without any reference to the law of nature. In addition to this, nothing can be more disagreeable, either to a poetical or philosophical mind, than the bustle of business, and the chicanery of the bar ; while the sale of opinion, or at least of assertion, has a considerable tendency to injure, not the radical principle, or great branches, but certainly the fine ethereal blossom, and (if I may use the expression) the *Mimosa* delicacy of moral sentiment.

Torquato disgusted with law.

Torquato attended the lectures of Guido Panciroli, a civilian of very considerable eminence. But he now began to be tormented at once by the activity of his genius, and by that appetite for fame which, before it is gratified, renders the aspiring youth a burden to himself. Nature, who has adapted ends to means, has perhaps given a thirst for celebrity in proportion to the power of acquiring it ; and the young poet, glowing with enthusiasm, and with hope, beheld before him the laurels for which he sighed, without seeing the serpents which basked amidst their leaves. “ An

which was never taught them, but on the promising and pleasing thoughts of litigious terms, fat contentions, and flowing fees.” Tasso is much better humoured, but still he does not view with a very favourable eye his juvenile employment. “ *Dubbio sono* (says he in one of his letters) *se la cognizion delle Leggi sia scienza, alle quali nella prima mia gioventù, prima ch'io studiassi filosofia, attesi un anno; anzi per dir vero pendo all'opinione, ch'ella non sia scienza.*” *Opere*, vol. X. p. 271.

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1560.
Act. 16.

Writes his
Rinaldo.

1561.
Act. 17.

inward prompting (as Milton tells us of himself*) now grew daily upon" him, "that, by labour and intense study, joined with the strong propensity of nature," he "might perhaps leave something so written to after times, as they should not willingly let it die." The taste of the age, the example of his father, his own inclination, and the boldness of his fancy, led him to the composition of a romantic poem. Like his great English compeer just mentioned, his "younger feet" had "wandered among those lofty fables which recount, in solemn cantos, the deeds of knighthood;" nor would it perhaps be easy to determine which of the two was better acquainted with the history of all those occurrences which never had occurred. To his poem Torquato gave the title of *Rinaldo*, from the name of the Paladin whose achievements it describes; and certainly, if we consider the youth of the author, and the short time in which it was composed, it is the most wonderful work that ever was written by man. It was finished in 1561, amidst the distraction of other studies, in the short space of ten months; this the young poet tells us himself in his preface, and he appeals for the proof of his assertion to the testimony of several gentlemen of distinction. At the conclusion of the poem, too, Torquato takes occasion to lament the difficult circumstances in which it was composed, alludes to his early age, and pays a high

* *P. Works*, vol. I. p. 120.

compliment to his patron the Cardinal Lewis of Esté, and to Bernardo his parent.

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1561.
Act, 17.

Thus have I sung, in youth's aspiring days,
Rinaldo's pleasing pains, and martial praise ;
While other studies slowly I pursued,
Ere twice revolv'd nine annual suns I view'd ;
Ungrateful studies, whence oppress'd I groan,
A burden to myself, and to the world unknown !

Oh ! from the hated task should Heaven release,
And shield from want by other means than these !
Oh ! should it leisure grant for happier lore,
And me, indulgent, to myself restore ;
In peaceful shades sequester'd to remain,
A voted bard of Phœbus' tuneful train ;
Then, sacred Lewis ! might I spread thy name
Where'er the sun resplendent darts his flame ;
Thyself the subject of my song might chuse,
And waken to the theme some nobler muse.

But thou first fruit of new-awaken'd powers !
Dear offspring of a few short studious hours !
Thou infant volume ! child of fancy, born
Where Brenta's waves the sunny meads adorn ;
To thee may friendly stars protection give,
And grant thee life, when I shall cease to live ;
Oh ! mayst thou still, while to oblivion flow,
Borne on the waves of time, the things below ;
Mayst thou still soar beyond thy country's bounds,
And live mid songs, with which the world resounds.

Him thou shalt see, the prince whose name serene
Dwells in my heart, and on thy front is seen ;
That name which deigns on thee to be imprest,
(Too poor a mansion for so great a guest.)
Him thou shalt see, but first with reverence due,
Go find the bard from whom my breath I drew ;
That bard to whom, such gifts he did bestow,
Existence is the smallest bliss I owe ;
He with a glance that Nature's deeps explores,
And searches all creation's hidden stores ;

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A. D. 1561.

Act. 17..

He shall the faults survey which viewless lie,
 To the short vision of this feeble eye:
 He with that hand, which to the measur'd close
 Of fabling verse, can join the truth of prose;
 Shall add those charms that grace the poet's rhymes,
 And send thy fame to far-succeeding times. *

* The basis of the above translation is from Hoole, but the alterations I have made are considerable. The following is the beautiful original.

Così scherzando, Io resonar già fea
 Di Rinaldo gli ardori, e i dolci affanni;
 Allhor, ch'ad altri studj, il dì toglica
 Nel quarto lustro ancor de' miei verdi anni,
 Ad altri studj, onde poi speme havea
 Di ristorar d'avversa sorte i danni,
 Ingrati studj, dal cui pondo oppresso,
 Giaccio ignoto ad altrui, grave a me stesso.

Mà, se mai fia, ch'à me lungo ozio un giorno
 Conceda, et à me stesso il ciel mi renda,
 Si ch'à l'ombra cantando in bel soggiorno
 Con Febo l'hore, e i dì felici spenda,
 Porterò forse, o gran *Luigi*, intorno
 I vostri honori ovunque il Sol risplenda,
 Con quella gratia, che m'havrete infusa;
 Destando à dir di voi più degna Musa.

Tu di l'ingegno mio de le fatiche
 Porto primiero, e caro frutto amato
 Picciol volume, nè le piaggie apriche,
 Che Brenta inonda in sì brev' otio nato:
 Così ti dian benigne stelle amiche
 Viver quando Io sarò di vita orbato:
 Così t'accoglia chiara fama in seno,
 Trà quei, de le cui lodi il mondo è pieno.

Pria, che di quel Signor giunghi al cospetto
 C'hò nel cor Io, tu ne la fronte impresso,
 Al cui nome gentil, vile e negletto
 Albergo sei, non qual conviensi ad esso:

The poem *Rinaldo*, abounds with great beauties, of some of which, not to interrupt the narration, I shall speak in the Appendix. * There is one remark, however, which I cannot help making, as being connected in some degree with the history of the human mind. If we were to trace the growth of genius from its first origin, I believe it would be found, that very early those peculiar qualities may be discerned, which are afterwards to distinguish the individual from all others ; and that time only expands and matures them, as the oak, when it shoots from the acorn, has all the rudiments of the perfect tree. “ At the age of twenty years,” says D’Al-embert, “ the young Montesquieu prepared already the materials of the *Spirit of Laws*, by an *extrait raisonne* of the immense volumes which compose the body of civil law, as heretofore Newton had laid, during his first youth, the foun-

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1561.
Act. 17.Early Idiosyn-
crasy of genius,

Vanne à colui, che fù dal cielo eletto
A’ darmi vita col suo sangue istesso.
Io per lui parlo, e spiro, e per lui sono
E, se n’ulla hò di bel, tutto e suo dono.

Ei con l’acuto sguardo, onde le cose
Mirando oltra la scorza al centro giunge,
Vedrà i difetti tuoi, ch’a me nascose
Occhio mal san, che scorge poco lunge,
E la man, c’hora veraci prose
A’ finte poesie di novo aggiunge,
Ti purgherà quanto patir tu puoi
Aggiungendo vaghezza à i versi tuoi.

Canto XII. ad finem.

* Appendix, (No. IV.)

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Act. 17.

dations of the works which have rendered him immortal.” *
Bacon, in his twenty-second year, composed a book (*Partus maximus Temporis*,) which was a miniature of his after writings; and Milton, when a boy of seventeen, talks of the shining gates of Olympus, of its crystal palace, and of its hall paved with emeralds:

Donec nitentes ad fores
Ventum est Olympi, et regiam crystallinam, et
Stratum smaragdis atrium. †

exemplified in
Tasso.

The remark which I have just made, receives considerable elucidation from an examination of this juvenile production of Tasso. Many of the finest fictions in the *Jerusalem Delivered*, are taken, as I shall shew in the Appendix, with very little variation, from the poem of *Rinaldo*. But a still more remarkable circumstance, and what I think places in a very striking light the vigour of the mind of Torquato, is, that he had in this early youth adopted the poetical creed which he afterwards followed. Such, as we have seen, was at this time the fame of Ariosto, that Bernardo acknowledges, that if Aristotle had read the *Orlando Furioso*, he would have altered his poetical rules, and become the advocate of complexity and disorder. Finding that resistance to the torrent of public opinion was vain, and that his regular Aristotelian work was treated with derision, Bernardo had yielded to the general sentiment, and confesses fre-

quently in his letters, that, from the fate of different poems, he found that nothing but the irregular romance could be acceptable to the people. The young Tasso, however, was unshaken by the discouragement of his father, and unseduced by the example of his age. “ I have turned (says he in the preface to *Rinaldo*,) from the manner of the moderns to that of the better ancients, and though I have not adopted the very strictest laws of Aristotle, the observance of which has been fatal to many poems, I have followed all the precepts of that philosopher which have not this tendency. Such are the introduction of episodes, the dramatic construction of the poem, discoveries, and changes of fortune. Such too, are the painting of manners, the observance of *costume*, and the unity of action, if not strictly, at least largely considered. Some, perhaps, may blame me that I have not adopted, in the beginning of my cantos, those proems and moral observations used by Ariosto, especially as my father, a man of so great authority, has sometimes also conformed to this practice. On the other hand, neither the prince of poets Virgil, nor Homer, nor any of the ancients, has done this ; and Aristotle clearly says in his *Poetics*, (which are in an admirable manner expounded at present in Padua by the most eloquent Sigonius,) that a poet is eminent according to the degree in which he imitates, and that he imitates the more, the less he speaks in his own person. Now, the practice of introductory stanzas, besides being devoid of imitation, has, while it looks like affectation, the appear-

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ance also of want of invention ; as if the poet could not put his moral or facetious remarks into the mouths of his characters, but must heap them up in a crude manner at the beginning of his cantos. In a poem, indeed, of great length and complexity, like that of Ariosto, I agree with the most learned Pigna in thinking, that it may be useful to sum up what has been said, and to recall the attention of the audience ; but I, who speak of a single knight, restricting, as much as can be done in the present times, his deeds to an unity of action, did not think such introductory verses proper or necessary. Thus, I have composed my *Rinaldo*, partly in imitation of the ancients, and partly of the moderns.” *

It appears, that several literary persons of distinction, en-

* Bernardo Tasso, in order to vary from others, while he conformed to the practice of prefatory verses, adopted the singular resolution of beginning each of the 100 cantos of his *Amadigi* with a description of morning, and closing each with a description of night. The satiety this occasioned must have been very great, and many of these auro-ras were cancelled by the advice of Vincenzo Laureo, and of Sperone. *Lettere* II. 345. —III. 146.

Torquato's opinion relative to introductory verses, is thus supported by Voltaire.

Eh quoi ! toujours clouer une préface
A tous mes chants ! La morale me lasse :
Un simple fait conté naïvement,
Ne contenant que la vérité pure,
Narré succinct, sans frivole ornement ;
Point trop d'esprit, aucun raffinement ;
Voilà de quoi désarmer la censure,
Allons au fait, lecteur, tout rondement,
C'est mon avis. Tableau d'après nature
S'il est bien fait, n'a besoin de bordure.

Chant. 10me.

couraged Torquato to the completion of his poem, and as he was extremely alarmed, lest he should thereby incur the displeasure of his father, they undertook to break the matter to him, and to soften it as much as possible. Bernardo was much afflicted at the information; but the work, of which, in his passage through Padua, he had seen a part, being highly extolled, and the ardour of his son for poetry being so great, he resolved to allow him to follow his inclination. Torquato immediately giving up the pretence of studying law, applied himself with transport to philosophy and poetry, and determined to print his poem by the advice of his friends, who again solicited Bernardo for that purpose. “As to an edition of the poem of Torquato, (say he, in a letter to Cesar Pavese,) “although I, as an affectionate father, and jealous of his honour, was of a contrary opinion, I have chosen rather to satisfy so many gentlemen who have solicited me, than my own desire and judgment. The poem, indeed, is marvellous, considered as the composition of a youth of eighteen years, being, both as to invention and elocution, worthy of praise, and sprinkled with the most graceful ornaments of poetry; yet, before it were given to the press, I should have wished to have seen the whole of it, and more accurately than I was able to do in so short a space. But to oppose the impetuous desire of a youth, which as a mighty torrent hastens to its end, would be a vain attempt, especially when that desire is seconded by such learned and judicious persons as Veniero, and Molino. Your aid, and that of other friends, will be necessary, that at least

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1562.
Act. 18.Tasso gives up
the study of
law.

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1562.
Act. 15.

Publication of
the *Rinaldo*.

it may be printed correctly ; and I intreat you with the utmost earnestness, that you will use your endeavours that this may be the case." *

Accordingly, the work was, in April 1562, given to the press of the Franceschi in Venice. It was printed in quarto, and after a few weeks saw the light, under the title of "*Il Rinaldo di Torquato Tasso all' Illustrissimo, e Reverendissimo Signor D. Luigi D. Este Card. con privilegj.*" The applause which the young Tasso, or Tassino as he was called, to distinguish him from his father, received in Italy, is incredible. The poem was remarkable for its beauty ; it was marvellous, considered as the composition of a youth of eighteen ; and at the first work of a young author, Envy herself is often loudest in her applause, in order to diminish the reputation of others, which, being better established, is more obnoxious. Besides, as we view the rising sun with much more interest than when he is walking in meridian glory, so the beginning of an illustrious career is contemplated with a certain tender sensibility, with a mixture of wonder and of hope, which is commonly diminished in the course of its progress. †

* *Lettere*, vol. II. p. 502. See also the preface of the *Rinaldo*.

† "The favour of mankind (says Mr Gibbon, in speaking of the success of the first volume of his work,) is most freely bestowed on a new acquaintance of any original merit; and the mutual surprise of the public, and their favourite, is productive of those warm sensibilities, which at a second meeting can no longer be rekindled."

Posthumous Works, vol. I. p. 148.

I am taking literally from Manso and Serassi, the account of the prodigious success of the *Rinaldo*. I entertain some doubts, however, of the extent of this success, as the se-

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1562.
Act. 18.

The great fame of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, has perhaps contributed to make the *Rinaldo* be neglected; a circumstance which sometimes happens to very illustrious authors, many of whose works are treated with unmerited disesteem, which would have given a lasting reputation to writers less distinguished. The young Tasso, besides the fame he acquired by his poem, extended and strengthened his friendships and patronage, by the honourable mention he made in it of different great personages, and illustrious youths. He attended the lectures of Sigonius on the *Poetics* of Aristotle, listened with deference and docility to the opinions of his father's friend Sperone, and studied philosophy under Pendasio and Piccolomini. The critical instructions of Sigonius, (an antiquarian, possessed of uncommon elegance and genius) were probably of considerable advantage to the rising poet. Never at least was there a period when criticism could do less harm, as the poets were generally overstepping the boundaries which propriety sets to fancy; and the case indeed was so desperate, that even Aristotle himself might be called in with advantage. It is probable, that the lectures inculcated method, connection, and congruity of thought; they might assist, too, the juvenile bard in putting

cond edition of the poem was not printed till 1570, eight years after the first. Nor is it improbable that this edition of 1570, which is in the same form, and by the same publisher as the other, may only be the first with a new title page. I mention this merely as a circumstance to be verified, for I have had no opportunity of verifying it myself. The truth is, that the public seem to have been in a considerable degree surfeited with romantic poetry at the time of the appearance of the *Rinaldo*. I mean with new romantic poetry.

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1562.
Act. 18.

his observations into order ; and at any rate, sustained his attention to poetry, and perhaps might fan his emulation. He lived as a companion with a son of the Duke of Termoli, as his father (who had now entered into the service of the cardinal of Este, to whom Torquato's poem was dedicated,) could not support him, having been disappointed both in his expectations from Spain, and in his hopes of profit from the *Amadigi*. With the cardinal, Bernardo did not remain longer than a year, after which he passed into the service of Duke William of Mantua, in the quality of principal secretary.

Tasso studies at
Bologna.

The university of Bologna, which had fallen into decay, was at this time restored to more than its ancient splendour by Cesi, bishop of Narni, who had been appointed governor of that city and province by Pius IV. After magnificent buildings had been erected, several distinguished scholars were invited as professors ; amongst others, Papio the friend of Bernardo, Sigonius and Pendasio. Torquato was too young for a chair, but as his presence would confer much distinction on the university, he was invited thither with much earnestness in November 1562; after having studied two years at Padua. At Bologna he had the advantage of much literary intercourse, and of increasing the number of his friends ; he had also the satisfaction of meeting his old school-fellow Christopher, who, with his brother Hercules, was studying, or at least residing at that university. *

* One of the houses which Torquato principally frequented at Bologna, was that of the Cavalier Bolognetti, who was at this time composing his epic poem *Costante*, in which,

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1563.
Act. 19.

Plans his Jerusalem.

At this period the biographers of Tasso fix the first conception of the *Jerusalem Delivered*. The crusades have been so often ridiculed and condemned, by those who consider declamations against fanaticism as a title to the name of a philosopher, that it is not without hesitation I profess myself of a different opinion. That they were eventually fortunate for Europe, is confessed indeed by every historian. They roused its nations from the lethargy in which they were sunk, and inspired them with energy; they depressed the power of a turbulent aristocracy; they communicated ideas of magnificence and refinement; and they proved, by the example of the maritime states of Italy, the advantages of commerce. Of an expedition, of which the consequences were so fortunate, it becomes us to speak with respect; especially, if we consider the generosity of the principle upon which it was founded. It is natural for the human mind to behold with delight and veneration places which have been the theatre of great transactions, the habitations of great personages, or the scene of illustrious deeds. The principle which led the enthusiast to the Holy Land, was similar to that which makes the philosopher lament that the country of Socrates and Demosthenes is in the hands of barbari-

amongst other flights of genius, he represents Jupiter as predicting the grandeur of the Roman pontiffs. "It is incredible," says Serassi, "how much Tasso profited by the learned discourse of this gentleman, whom he revered as a master." "Non è credibile quanto il Tasso approfittasse da' doti ragionamenti di questo Signore, cui egli osservava come maestro." *Vita del Tasso*, p. 111.

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1563.
Act. 19.Reflections on
the crusades.

ans. If at present we sympathise, when we read, in the writings of Condorcet and others, indignant reflections and regrets of this sort, let us honour the same emotion, when, at least, as properly excited. * The country where the Son of God accomplished the redemption of mankind, or, (viewing it merely in a moral and political view,) the country where Jesus established a religion, which triumphed over so many obstacles, and had such an influence upon mankind, is at least as interesting as that of Sophocles and Plato. While the philosopher, therefore, is indignant at the subjugation and slavery of Greece, let him cease to blame the Christian who groaned at that of Palestine.

Tourne les yeux, sa tombe est près de ce palais ;
C'est ici la montagne où, lavant nos forfaits,
Il voulut expirer sous les coups de l'impie ;
C'est là que de sa tombe il rappela sa vie :

* “ On a parlé, (says Condorcet in his *Life of Voltaire*,) de l'injustice d'une guerre contre les Turcs. Peut-on être injuste envers une horde de brigands qui tiennent dans les fers un peuple esclave, à qui leur avide férocity prodigue les outrages ? Qu'ils rentrent dans ces déserts dont la faiblesse de l'Europe leur a permis de sortir, puisque dans leur brutal orgueil ils ont continués à former une race de tyrans ; et qu'enfin la patrie de ceux à qui nous devons nos lumieres, nos arts, nos vertus même, cesse d'être deshonorée par la presence d'un peuple qui unit les vices infames de la mollesse à la ferocité des peuples sauvages.” Similar sentiments are to be met with in the works of Voltaire, who thus, for example, addresses the Empress of Russia.

Puissent les dieux sur-tout, si ces dieux eternels
Entrent dans les débats des malheureux mortels,
Puissent ces purs esprits émanés du grand Etre,
Ces moteurs des destins, ces confidents du maître,
Que jadis dans la Grece imagina Platon,
Conduire tes guerriers aux champs de Marathon,

Tu ne saurais marcher dans cet auguste lieu,
 Tu n'y peux faire un pas, sans y trouver on Dieu. *

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1563.
 Act. 19.

The idea of the crusades, indeed, considered merely in a political view, as it was the most generous, so it was perhaps the wisest that could be formed; and we have to regret principally that want of skill in the science of government, which lost the Holy Land to the Christians, after it had once been acquired. Had sufficient establishments been formed in that country, to have resisted the hordes against which those expeditions were directed, it would have been well for Europe. When the philosopher in future times shall appreciate the conduct of past ages, it will not, perhaps, be the crusades that he will blame. But his indignation will be excited against that jealousy of Christian princes, which has suffered the finest regions of Europe, and of Asia, to remain in the possession of a tribe of barbarians, who have become luxurious without being less ferocious. He will lament the fate of countries, endeared by so many associations, and which, sunk in slavery and dependence, have received neither ornament nor benefit from those arts, and those sciences to which they gave birth.

Whatever opinion, however, the philosopher may form of the crusades, the critic will certainly acknowledge, that it was

Aux remparts de Platée, aux murs de Salamine !
 Que, sortant des débris qui couvrent sa ruine,
 Athenes ressuscite à ta puissante voix !

Epiire a l'Impératrice de Russie.

* *Zaire*, Act. II. Sc. 3.

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1563.
Act. 19.

Their fitness as
a subject of
poetical em-
bellishment.

impossible to select a subject which could give more ample room for the fablings and embellishments of poetry. Like the war which is immortalized by Homer, it was a general union of the states of Europe against the people of Asia. The difference of their religious opinions, of their manners, of their dress; the mixture of European champions, and “dusk faces with white silken turbants wreathed,” gave abundant scope for various description. The distance of the country, too, where the achievements took place, the darkness of the age, and ignorance of the rites of the Infidels, gave sufficient probability to the creations of fancy. The action was great, simple, and magnificent: It was one, also, in which the sympathy of the reader is not, as is the case *perhaps* in Homer, and *certainly* in Virgil, on the side of the vanquished.

The choice, likewise, of the subject selected by Torquato, though always important to the western nations of Europe, was peculiarly interesting in the age of that poet. The memory of the crusades (as has been observed by Terrasson, *) was still very lively, and a new expedition of that kind was planned by Gregory XIII., who ascended the pontifical throne in 1572. The recent conquests of Solyman and Selim, had renewed in the souls of all Christians a zeal, mixed with terror, against the infidel nations. Add to this, that many of the illustrious houses of christendom referred to the

crusades the origin or the decoration of their families ; as the greater part of the Grecian princes reckoned their descent from some hero at the siege of Troy. Thus, the subject of Torquato had, like that of Homer, the advantage of interesting the vanity, not merely of a single people, but of nations detached from, and even hostile to each other.

Several minstrels, and some insignificant writers, had already versified on the subject of the exploits of Godfrey, and the conquest of Jerusalem.* Of these it is dubious if Torquato had ever seen one ; and the Italian writers are altogether silent on the supposed origin of his poem. They seem to take it for granted, that the master poets of their nation can invent a subject, can utter natural emotions, can describe the morning as red, and the twilight as grey, without borrowing the whole of the conception, and the greater part of the descriptions and sentiments, from antecedent poetasters. The associations which lead to the most important results, which have the most powerful influence over our conduct and exertions, are often so minute and evanescent as altogether to escape our recollection. The birth of one of the epic poems of Milton was owing to the question of a Quaker ; and the idea of the *Jerusalem* might spring from something casually said in conversation, at a time when subjects for epic poems, and the conquests of the

* See *Du Cange* sub voce *Ministelli*.

Alixandres, Artus, *Godefroy* li sachans: •

Dequoy cils menestriers font les nobles romans.

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1563.
Act. 19.

Turks, were the common topics of literary and political discourse. In whatever way, however, it was suggested to the poet, he must have viewed it as a rich subject of poetical embellishment; and we know that it affected strongly both his religious and his patriotic feelings. *

First sketch of
the *Jerusalem*
Delivered.

Among the manuscripts of the Vatican, a sketch of the three first cantos of the *Jerusalem Delivered* is preserved, consisting of a hundred and sixteen stanzas, and addressed to Guidubaldo della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, under whose protection Torquato lived at Bologna. In this, (written in the poet's nineteenth year), are many beautiful stanzas which

* In the *Rinaldo*, Torquato, at the end of the description of the discipline in Charlemagne's camp, deploras the sloth and effeminacy which had crept into the Christian armies; while the Turks, at that time so terrible by a succession of warlike Sultans, were daily threatening the subjugation of the west. The young poet compares the Ottoman empire to a serpent, which had just been swallowing Greece, and was awfully advancing to destroy the rest of Europe.

Che meraviglia è poi, s'el rio serpente,
Sotto cui Grecia homai languendo more;
Orgoglioso minaccia à l'occidente,
E par, che'l prema già, che già il divore.

Canto VI. St. 13.

What wonder, then, if that huge Pythian pest,
Which over dying Greece now rears his crest,
Proud to the west should roll with added power,
And seem to crush already, and devour!

That Torquato thought a new crusade not improbable, appears from Canto I. St. 5. of his *Jerusalem*; and he perhaps did not despair of himself gaining laurels, and meeting adventures in the Holy Land.

he afterwards adopted in his poem ; and we see that he had already formed, in a great degree, that magnificent and majestic style by which he is distinguished.

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1569.
Act. 19.

While Torquato was thus applying to his poetical and philosophical studies, a circumstance happened which gave him a good deal of disturbance, and was finally the occasion of his leaving Bologna. Some person or persons in that university had been for a considerable time exercising their poetical talents and malignity, in satirising several scholars and gentlemen of the place. It happened one day that Tasso repeated one of those pasquinades which had not been generally dispersed, and as he was a distinguished poet, and becoming already an object too brilliant for the distempered eye of envy, he was immediately accused of being the author, not only of that, but of all the others. It was in vain that he remarked, that he was as much satirised as any one ; an order was issued for his arrest ; and as he happened to be out of the way, his papers were carried to Arresio, the criminal auditor. Not the smallest suspicious circumstance appeared from the perusal of his papers ; but such was his indignation that, not satisfied with the establishment of his innocence, he determined to leave Bologna. In youth the sensibility to injury is extremely delicate ; whether that, unacquainted with the vices of mankind, the juvenile mind considers every wrong as something monstrous ; whether the idea of self-importance is then peculiarly vigorous, being unnipt as yet by the frosts of indifference and neglect. At Bologna, too, Torquato found it very difficult to support

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A. D. 1564.
Act 20.

himself, on account of the extreme hardness of the times, and the narrowness of his fortune.

Tasso leaves
Bologna.

Accordingly, in February 1564, our young poet left that city, with the resolution of going to his father at the court of Mantua. Learning, however, at Modena, that Bernardo had been sent to Rome, he went to reside a short time at Castelvetro, with the Rangoni, who were friends of his father, and had been celebrated by himself in his poem of *Rinaldo*. From persons whom he had placed in the *Palace of Courtesy*, it is not to be doubted that his reception was courteous. On his arrival, he wrote a letter of justification to the Bishop of Narni, which, if warmth be on such occasions a proof of innocence, will be acknowledged to be a competent defence. “ But allowing,” says he, “ that every presumption was against me, and that there were none in my favour, of what do they accuse me? Why are they so eager to imprison, so zealous to punish me? It is for a satire, they will say. Be it so; but where is it? Let them produce it, that I may be able to affirm whether it be mine or not. Let them shew me that in which I have offended, that I may blush at my fault, or grieve at my misfortune. But if it cannot be found, if no one can affirm that he has heard the whole of it, why proceed against me with such malignant wrath, with such a poisonous and felonious fury? Why treat me (let me be allowed to say it) with so little respect; or rather, why insult me for a thing of which it is not known, I say not whether it was made by me, but of which the very existence is dubious? I would wish to know by what laws this sort of justice is supported; by what doctors

it is taught ; by what judges it is administered ; and in what countries it is practised ? If it be of importance to public and private tranquillity that the authors of pasquinades should be punished, why is the severity of the laws used towards this one only, which, like a new chimæra, is talked of much, but is no where visible ?”

How ill, alas ! was a mind of such keen sensibility calculated to bear the buffets of a world, where even mere forbearance may be considered as an inestimable favour. The morbidity of Torquato’s sensations was increased by the circumstance of his living with noble associates ; by his own needy condition ; and by the consequent comparative neglect he either met with, or might fear to meet with, from vulgar minds. In the course of his epistle, he goes on to complain, that he had been singled out from a number of persons who less deserved than himself to be treated with distinction, not considering that the greatest of all injuries one can do his brethren of mankind, is to have an oppressive degree of merit. Whoever endeavours, like Gulliver, to overstride us, may expect on our part a malignant curiosity, and that parts of his character will be disclosed, which otherwise might perhaps have been concealed. It was not the satire of Torquato, (if indeed it was his, which both this letter, and the whole mass of his writings, in which there is scarcely a satirical reflection, prevent us from believing,) but his *Rinaldo*, that required forgiveness. His *Aminta* still farther excited the resentment of the public, and his *Jerusalem* made it quite inexorable ; while he, meanwhile, was always wondering how

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Act. 20.

the most inoffensive person in the world could give the world offence.

From Castelvetro, Torquato went to Correggio, on a visit to Claudia Rangona, a lady of great accomplishments, from whom, being a friend of his father, and celebrated by himself in his *Rinaldo*, he met a very kind reception. Not only had he taken the precaution of placing her in his *Palace of Courtesy*, but he had celebrated at once her poetical talents and her beauty.* While at Correggio, he received a most affectionate letter from Scipio Gonzaga, inviting him back to Padua, and requesting him to become a member of the academy *degli Eterei*, which Scipio had at this time instituted. This noble youth, afterwards a cardinal, was the most valuable friend our bard had made at Padua; he too was one of the worthies in the *Palace of Courtesy*, and he will be often mentioned in the sequel of this narrative.† Torquato was not in circumstances to require much wooing; he accordingly re-

Scipio Gon-
zaga,

* L'altra, che par, che l'aria intorno irragge,
Ond' Amor se medesmo accende, e fere,
Claudia Rangona fia, che non gli altrui,
Ma faran chiara i proprii scritti suoi.

Can. VIII. St. 15.

Lo ! one, whom beams of beauty's light enclose,
Whence love himself with kindling ardour glows;
Claudia Rangona—not to fame made known
By others pens, but honour'd by her own.

HOOLE.

† Tasso's poetical compliment to his friend in the *Rinaldo*. is in Can. VIII. St. 11. Tiraboschi (*Storia*, &c. P. i. p. 145.) gives a long extract relative to the institution of the academy *degli Eterei*, taken from the commentaries of Scipio Gonzaga on his own life. Of this work, consisting of three books, and written in very elegant Latin, an edition was published at Rome, 1791, by Marotti.

turned to Padua, and rewarded the gratulations of the academy, by comparing them, in a sonnet, to laurels, and himself (alluding to his name) to a yew.

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1564.
Act, 20.

In this academy, Torquato took the name of *Pentito*, or the *Penitent*, according to the conjecture of Manso, because he repented of the time which he had consumed in the study of law ; a circumstance which need not have oppressed his conscience, as it is probable his guilt in that respect had not been very atrocious. It is more reasonable to think with Serassi, that he meant to express his grief that he had ever left Padua, since his treatment at Bologna had been much less friendly. In Padua he resumed his former studies, endeavouring to understand Aristotle, and especially Plato, the philosopher of all others most congenial to a poetic mind.* Of Plato, a work remains noted by the hand of Torquato ; but his study of him appears most evidently from the number of dialogues he wrote in imitation of the manner of that philosopher. At the same time, as he had planned his epic poem, and as nothing tends so much to make a person understand a subject as writing on that subject, he composed this year three admirable discourses on heroic poetry. These, which are still extant, were dedicated to Scipio Gonzaga, but remained in manuscript till the year 1587.†

* Appendix, No. V.

† See Appendix, (No. VI.) These *Discourses on heroic poetry* are to be found, vol. V. p. 487. of Tasso's Works.

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1564.

Act. 20.

Tasso visits
Mantua.

When his term was concluded, Torquato visited Mantua, to which city his father had now returned from Rome. The sight of an only son, in whom his youth was renewed, and renewed with more than original splendour, must have given to the old man inexpressible joy. With what pride must the young poet have communicated the glorious images which fascinated his imagination, and with what rapture must they have inspired the aged bard ! To embrace, after long absence, a son, is much ; to clasp an only son is more ; but to hold to one's heart a son distinguished among mankind by his deeds, or by his genius, is ecstasy not to be conceived. The appearance of such men is rare, and when they do appear, their parents have generally sunk into the grave before the fame of their child is established. Often, too, they are incapable of appreciating it ; but the son of Bernardo was distinguished in a manner, the nature of which he valued most highly, and best understood. *

But as every human good is attended with evil, the very affection which Bernardo bore his son, made him feel more strongly the dependance of his situation. He found, after an expectation of six years, that he had in vain dedicated his *Amadigi* to the king of Spain ; and he could not think, without anxiety, that he must leave his son in the uncertain condition of a courtier, the miseries of which he had so long and so bitterly experienced. As it was necessary, however, that some situation should be found for Torquato, and as the

* *Oper.* vol. X. p. 247. II. p. 295.

Cardinal Lewis of Este had testified much satisfaction at the dedication of *Rinaldo*, interest was made, that the young poet should have some appointment at the court of Ferrara. He was introduced there by Count Fulvio Rangone, on his way back to Padua; and it is probable his reception was gracious, as he had beautifully complimented, in his *Rinaldo*, each of the members of the reigning house. *

CHAP. V.

A. D. 1564.
Act. 20.Introduced at
Ferrara.

At Padua, Torquato arrived in November 1564, and there spent the following year in application to his studies, in writing verses, and discoursing in the academy *degli Eterei*, of which the celebrated Battista Guarini, his friend, and afterwards his rival, was at this time admitted a member. † By his admission, the loss was made up which the academy sustained in the death of Santino, a young man of great hopes, on whom a funeral oration was composed by Torquato. ‡ While occupied in this manner, advice came that the cardinal of Este had received him among his attendants, and that he was expected at Ferrara by the first of December. At this period, Sperone had returned from Rome, much enraged at the neglect he had there met with from the nephews of Pius IV.; and either from jealousy, or a temporary disgust at the life of a courtier, strongly advised Torquato not to accept of the offer. He painted to him the wickedness of courts, the dangers of inexperience, and the perse-

Battista
Guarini.Tasso is invited
from Padua to
Ferrara.

* Canto VIII. St. 5, 6, 7, 14, 15.

† For an account of this poet, see Appendix, No. VII.

‡ *Oper.* vol. XI. p. 4.

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A. D. 1565.
Act. 21.

cution and calumny which are the attendants of genius.* Torquato, in the ardour of youth, gave very little attention to the warnings of the philosopher, who, when his own hopes revived on the election of Gregory XIII. to the pontificate, forgot his apothegms, and hastened to Rome with all the velocity of expectation and hunger. After an affectionate leave of his friends, Torquato departed to Mantua, to see his father, listen to his instructions, and provide some necessities. He was there seized by a most dangerous sickness, from which he was relieved by the strength of youth, or by the physician Coppino, who was rewarded for his trouble by a stanza in the *Floridante*.† This was a new epic poem, formed from an episode of the *Amadigi*, which Bernardo, not discouraged by the little fruit produced by the parent stock, was now, at the age of seventy-two, endeavouring to mature with all the eagerness of youth. As soon as Torquato recovered strength and vigour, he departed to Ferrara, the theatre of the most glorious and miserable part of his life.

* To this discouragement of Sperone, Torquato, as we shall afterwards see, alludes in his *Aminta*. Att. I. Sc. 2. v. 228. *et seq.*

† E'l buon Coppin, ch'al mio figliuol la vita
 Salvò, ch'era alla morte omai vicino,
 Nell' eta sua più verde, e più fiorita
 Mentre facea in Parnaso alto cammino;
 E con la sua la mia, ch'era fornita,
 Ma tutto vince il Proveder divino.
 Tal che rinverde il mio già secco alloro;
 Or torna Musa al tuo usato lavoro.

CHAPTER VI.

Account of the family of Este.—Arrival of Tasso at Ferrara during a time of great rejoicings.—He recommends himself to the Princesses of Este, and becomes enamoured of Leonora.—Resumes his Jerusalem Delivered.—Visits Padua and Mantua.—Probable suggestion of the Aminta.—Becomes attached to Lucretia Bendidio.—Defends Theses on Love in the academy of Ferrara—Death of Bernardo Tasso.

A. D. 1565 — 1570.

AET. 21 — 26.

THE family of Este was the most ancient and illustrious in Italy, and the historian who would trace it, is confused at length by a number of petty transactions, and lost amidst the mazes of genealogy. It owns the same parent stock, or rather is the parent stock of the house of Brunswick, and consequently of the family which is seated on the throne of

CHAP. VI.

A. D. 1565.
Act. 21.

CHAP. VI.

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the British Empire.* The lineage of this distinguished house has been interwoven into the immortal poems of Ariosto, and of Tasso; † and as if nothing should be wanting to its glory, the acuteness of Leibnitz himself has been employed in settling the pedigree of the Azzos and Adelberts, who had the honour of being its progenitors. ‡

Patronage of
genius by the
house of Este.

The princes of the family of Este were in general of distinguished talents; and a younger brother, with the rank of cardinal, usually held some of the richest benefices in France and Italy. These ecclesiastics rivalled the dukes their brothers in the patronage of genius; and though the fame of the Medici is, (by the elevation of a pontiff of that family, whose name has been associated with all that is splendid in art or literature,) more diffused in foreign countries, yet the literary objects of their encouragement were far less distinguished than those of the rival house. In this court, (says Mr Gibbon, after speaking of the seminaries instituted by the family of Este, and the support which it gave to the drama,) In this court “was invented and refined the Pas-

* Muratori *Antichità Estensi*, vol. I. p. 50. Leibnit. *Script. Bruns.* tom. III. p. 657.

† *Orlando Fur.* Cant. III. St. 16. *et seq.* *Gerus. lib.* Cant. XVII. St. 65. *et seq.*

‡ See Appendix, No. VIII. In the dedication of Hoole's translation of the *Jerusalem Delivered to the Queen*, which was written by S. Johnson, the connection between the houses of Brunswick and Este is thus alluded to:

“Tasso has a peculiar claim to your majesty's favour, as follower and panegyrist of the house of Este, which has one common ancestor with the house of Hanover; and in reviewing his life, it is not easy to forbear a wish that he had lived in a happier time, when he might, among the descendants of that illustrious family, have found a more liberal and potent patronage.”

toral Comedy, a romantic Arcadia, which violates the truth of manners, and the simplicity of nature ; but which commands our indulgence by the elaborate luxury of eloquence and wit. The father of the Tuscan Muses, the sublime and unequal Dante, has pronounced that Ferrara was never honoured with the name of a poet ; he would have been astonished to behold the chorus of bards, of melodious swans, who now peopled the banks of the Po. In the court of Duke Borso, and his successor, Boiardo count of Scandiano was respected as a noble, a soldier, and a scholar ; his vigorous fancy first celebrated the loves and exploits of the Paladin Orlando, and his fame has at once been preserved and eclipsed by the brighter glories of the continuator of his work. Ferrara may boast, that in classic ground Ariosto lived and sung, that the lines of the *Orlando Furioso*, and the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, were inscribed in everlasting characters, under the eye of the first and second Alphonso. In a period of near three thousand years, five great epic poets have arisen in the world ; and it is a singular prerogative, that two of the five should be claimed as their own by a short age, and a petty state." *

The dukes of Ferrara were, in a pompous age, distinguished by their affectation of state and magnificence, and their court, even on common, and still more on great occasions, presented an union of classic taste, and gothic splendour.

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A. D. 1565.
Act. 21.Character of
Alphonso II.

This was peculiarly the case at present, when the dukedom of Ferrara was governed by Alphonso II., who, in 1559, had, at the age of twenty-six, succeeded his father Hercules II. This prince was brave, just, liberal, continent, zealously religious, and a patron of every elegant art. These virtues were, however, balanced by great defects; he was haughty, capricious, ready to take offence, and, when offence was taken, almost implacable. “Alphonso (says Muratori, who confesses his good qualities,*) was remarkable for punctilio and caprice; to say nothing of his other defects. The quarrels he had with the Cardinal Lewis his brother, with Cosimo I. grand duke of Tuscany his father-in-law, and with the dukes of Mantua and of Urbino his relations, are sufficient to prove what I affirm. Neither could Giam-Batista Cintio Giraldi, nor the Cavalier Batista Guarini, both of them his secretaries, and men of uncommon merit, continue in his service; and several other examples might be mentioned. Don Cæsar (the successor of Alphonso, and first duke of Modena) was not more fortunate; for *after he married Donna Virginia de’ Medici*, (whose father Cosimo I. was hated by Alphonso, on account of their long and bitter dispute about precedence,) that prince conceived against him aversion and rage.” The attention of the reader is peculiarly requested to this last sentence, as it shows the strong indignation conceived against the Medici by the duke of

* *Antichità Estensi*, tom. II. p. 426. His Eulogy by Tasso may be found *Gerus. lib. Can. XVII. St. 90. et seq.*

Ferrara, and will account, I think, in a great measure, for the misfortunes of Torquato.

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Act. 21.

What distinguished, as I have said, principally the present court of Ferrara, was its uncommon magnificence. The celebrated Montaigne, by whom it was visited in 1580, tells us, in his travels to Italy, that he was astonished at the number of the courtiers, and richness of their array. During the carnival and other festivals, tournaments were exhibited, and, on some joyful occasions, the visions of Ariosto seem to have been realized. Enchanted palaces were defended by monsters, and attacked by knights; or allegorical representations were displayed, of ingenious contrivance and dazzling splendour. Of these pompous pageants a number are enumerated by Muratori, in the second volume of his *Antiquities of the House of Este*. Thus he narrates, that on the last day of the carnival 1561, there was a wonderful tournament in the court of the palace of Ferrara, “where was exhibited the castle of Gorgoferusa, enchanted, according to the taste and model of the *Romanzieri*.”* A still more splendid spectacle took place three weeks afterward, as Lewis, the patron of Tasso, at that time received his cardinal’s hat. When Charles, Arch-duke of Austria, visited, in 1569, his sister, the Duchess of Ferrara, “there appeared (says Muratori,) among the other shews presented on the occasion, a castle on an island, which was feigned to be en-

Magnificence
of the court of
Ferrara.

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A. D. 1565.
Act. 21.

chanted by a sorceress (*una maga*). It was attacked by various knights, with a wonderful diversity of views, monsters, and fireworks. This appeared the more remarkable, as it was exhibited during the night, which, by the splendour of the illuminations, was converted into day. Unfortunately (continues Muratori) the delight produced by this solemn festival was saddened by a very mournful accident. The Count Guido and Annibal de Bentivogli, (the one a son, the other brother, of Cornelius Bentivoglio,) the Count Hercules Montecuccoli, Nicoluccio Rondinelli, and the Count Hercules Bevilacqua, all of them lords of rare nobility, fell into the water, and (except the last) perished miserably, to the infinite regret of all who learned their hapless fate." * This unfortunate event, (I may by the way remark) seems to have put a stop to spectacles of enchantments at Ferrara; as the death of Henry II., in a tournament, (at which Alphonso, Duke of Ferrara, had been one of the chief assistants,) created an aversion in France to that species of spectacle. "The fatal accident (says M. de Ste. Palaye) which made Henry II. perish in the midst of his court, and before the eyes of a nation to whom he was dear, produced a new revolution, which completed the abolition of chivalry. The mortal wound received by that prince, extinguished in the heart of Frenchmen the ardour which they had till that time testified for jousts and tournaments;—and

* *Ant. Est.* tom. II. p. 396.

these powerful incitements to exertion having ceased, drew into thier fall that of chivalry itself." * By the invention of fire-arms, too, many of the evolutions of the knight were rendered useless, and his cumbrous armour of no avail: a regular system of warfare was adopted, and skill and tactics prevailed over the bursts of irregular valour. Had the birth of Tasso been a few years later, he could not have witnessed the *costumi* and manners he describes; he must have painted, not from clear observation and existing objects, but his sketches must have been taken through the dim and uncertain mists of tradition. Nor ought the romantic and magnificent spectacles which were frequently exhibited during the youthful poet's residence at Ferrara, to be altogether passed over in silence. They are characteristic, not only of the taste of the age, but they probably contributed in some degree to warm the fancy of Torquato. The amusements of the period in which a poet lived, sometimes even throw light on his choice of a subject. Thus, when the Cardinal di Prato entered Florence as a pacificator, soon after the banishment of Dante, and about the period of the commencement of his poem, the citizens celebrated the arrival of that ecclesiastic, and endeavoured to divert him by a representation of hell, and the torments of the damned. †

When Tasso arrived at Ferrara, which happened on the last day of October 1565, that city, which has long been the

CHAP. VI.

A. D. 1565.
Act. 21.Tasso arrives
at Ferrara.

* *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, tom. II. p. 38.

† Villani, lib. VIII. cap. 70.

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Act. 21.

most gloomy and sad in Italy,* resembled an ornamented theatre, oh an occasion of great vanity to the reigning house. The pride or interest of the family of Ferrara led them to form splendid alliances; and two of its princes, Azo VIII. and Hercules I., had been connected with the crown of Naples, in the rival houses of Arragon and Anjou. Alphonso I. had married Lucretia Borgia, daughter of Pope Alexander VI.; a woman whose detence has in these days been undertaken by Mr Roscoe, with an ardour and generosity worthy of the most flourishing ages of chivalry. Their son Hercules II. was married to Renée, youngest daughter of Lewis XII. of France; a lady looked upon in Italy with a less favourable eye than her once-accommodating mother-in-law. This is owing to the circumstance of her having been converted by Calvin from the Roman church in 1535, during a stay which he made for some months incognito at Ferrara. †

* “ Ils arriverent ensemble a Ferrare, l’une des villes d’Italie les plus tristes, car elle est à la fois vaste et deserte; le peu d’habitans qu’on trouve de loin en loin dans les rues marchent lentement, comme s’ils etaient assurés d’avoir du temps pour tout. On ne peut concevoir comment c’est dans ces mêmes lieux que la cour la plus brillante a existé, celle qui fût chantée par l’Arioste et le Tasse.”

Mad. de Staël, *Corinne*.

This change took place soon after the death of Alphonso in 1597, when his successor, Don Cæsar, was driven from Ferrara by Clement VIII.

† The name which Calvin assumed at Ferrara was Charles d’Heppesville; and the conversion of Renée is by Muratori attributed to two circumstances. The first of these was the goodness of her heart, which led her to sympathize with the persecuted Hugonots; the other was her hatred to the papacy, on account of the indignant manner in which Julius II. had treated the house of Este, and her father Lewis XII. Her husband the duke, in consequence of her becoming a Protestant, confined her for a considerable

Splendid, however, as was this alliance, the son of Hercules, Alphonso II., was now leading to the altar a maid of more distinguished birth, Barbara of Austria, daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand I, and sister of Maximilian II.

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Act. 21.

The young Tasso arrived in the midst of pageantry of the most brilliant kind, while the rehearsal was going on of the scenes to be exhibited on the arrival of Barbara.* It is probable his reception was favourable, as the cardinal his patron was uncommonly affable, and possessed all the good qualities of his brother, without the disagreeable ones by which they were obscured. The poet mingled with the members of the numerous household of that ecclesiastic, which consisted of eight hundred persons, all of them eager and impatient for the approaching event. On the second of December following, the queen, as she was called on account of her birth, made her entrance into Ferrara with a numerous and pompous attendance, and wearing a golden crown. A tournament took place upon the fifth, at which an hundred knights disputed the prize of skill and prowess; and on the eleventh was exhibited the *Temple of Love*, a spectacle which, in magnificence and novelty, rivalled or transcended whatever had been seen in modern Italy. “Did

Temple of
Love.

time to leave apartments in the castle of Ferrara, and separated her from her daughters, who were educated in a convent of nuns. She was a princess of great learning, and uncommon talents; her disposition was sweet and affable; her character firm and noble. After her son's accession she returned to France, where she resided till her death (1575) in the castle of Montargis. The famous Clement Marot was her secretary.

* *Opere*, vol. VIII. p. 4. He seems also to allude to it in the *Aminta*, Atto I. Sc. 2.

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Act. 21.

I possess (says Gibbon) a book printed under the name of the *Chivalries of Ferrara*, I should not pretend to describe the nuptials of the same duke (Alphonso II.) with the emperor's sister; the balls, the feasts, and tournaments of many busy days; and the final representation of the *Temple of Love*, which was erected in the palace garden, with a stupendous scenery of porticoes and palaces, of woods and mountains. That this last shew should continue six hours without appearing tedious to the spectators, is perhaps the most incredible circumstance.* The tournaments, balls, and shews lasted six days; and they would have continued many more, had they not been interrupted by news of the death of Pius IV.

1566.
Act. 22.

The princes and cardinals who were present at the rejoicings of Ferrara immediately departed, and, amongst others, Cardinal Lewis of Este went to Rome, to assist at the conclave for the election of a new pontiff. This took place on the 7th of January 1566, when Friar Michael Ghislieri assumed the Tiara, and the name of Pius V. Meanwhile Tasso remained at Ferrara, where, during the bustle and tumult, it is probable he had met with little attention. The pageantry which I have mentioned, had to him, perhaps, given little pleasure: he saw himself unnoticed in the crowd; and distinction and glory were the objects for which

* *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. II. p. 692. This last remark is a hit against Muratori, who concludes his account of the Tempio d'Amore with saying, "E quantunque durasse la funzione circa sei ore, pure universalmente parve di corta durata."

Ant. Est. tom. II. p. 395.

CHAP. VI.

A. D. 1566.
Act. 27.

he sighed. There are few beings less disposed to sympathise in the parade of magnificence, than a young man who pants for honour, and who has not yet acquired it. He reflects, with bitterness, on his own comparative insignificance, and finds it necessary for his repose to seek seclusion till he can appear with lustre.

Probably, however, I am misrepresenting the feelings of Torquato; the young author of *Rinaldo* was, perhaps, an object of attention, and congratulated himself on being admitted to the view of so much grace and beauty as burst upon his sight.* During the absence of the cardinal, he insinuated himself into the favour of the Princesses Lucretia and Leonora, sisters of Alphonso. Renée of France had brought her husband two sons and three daughters; but the eldest, Anne, had, at the age of seventeen, been married

The princesses
of Ferrara.

* Passai per là dov'è'l felice albergo:
 Quindi uscian fuor voci canore, e dolci,
 E di cigni, e di Ninfe, e di Sirene,
 Di Sirene celesti: e n'uscian suoni
 Soavi, e chiari; e tanto altro diletto,
 Ch' attonito godendo, ed ammirando
 Mi fermai buona pezza——
 O che sentii! che vidi allora! l'vidi
 Celesti Dee, Ninfe leggiadre, e belle——
 ——— ed in quel punto
 Sentii me far di me stesso maggiore;
 Pien di nova virtù; pieno di nova
 Deitade, e cantai guerre, ed Eroi
 Sdegnando pastoral ruvido carne.

Aminta, At. I. Sc. 2.

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Act. 22.

(in 1548) to the celebrated Francis, Duke of Guise.* Her sisters, Lucretia and Leonora, continued to reside, unmarried, at the court of their brother. Of these ladies the first was thirty-one, and the other thirty, years of age; but they were still lovely in their persons, their minds were exalted, and their manners graceful and condescending. To every elegant female accomplishment, they united the severer studies which were fashionable among the distinguished women of that day; and the elder, not merely admired, but even cultivated poetry. They were willing patronesses of learned men, and especially of the worshippers of the muse, as appears from many dedications and compliments that were paid them.

* Of this lady the following character is given by Condorcet, in his *Eloge* of the chancellor d'Hôpital. Mentioning the massacre of Protestants which took place, by her husband's order, at Vassy, he thus proceeds: "Le carnage dura tout le jour, il ne cessa qu'aux prières de la Duchesse de Guise, princesse de la maison d'Est, qui jamais ne partagea ni les projets ambitieux de son époux, ni les fureurs de son fils; qui sauva, à la journée de la Saint Barthelemi, la fille du chancelier de l'Hôpital, et dont l'esprit juste, et l'ame sensible avaient été formés pour un autre siècle."

To the marriage of Anne of Este with the Duke of Guise, Tasso, as I shall show in the Appendix, alludes, in an important passage of the *Jerusalem Delivered*. This, as we are told by Serassi, has not been understood by any commentator; and certainly he himself has (whether voluntarily or undesignedly I know not,) completely misrepresented its purport. He wishes, in consequence of this passage, to exhibit Tasso as a prophet; and makes a most courtly use of it in the dedication of his work to the spouse of the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, Mary Beatrice of Este. See Appendix, (No. IX.)

After the death of her first husband, the Duchess of Guise espoused James of Savoy, Duke of Nemours, a man as celebrated in fiction as her former lord is in history. He is the hero of the beautiful novel *La Princesse de Cleves*, a distinguished work, which is considered as having formed a new æra in the annals of romance.

CHAP. VI.

A. D. 1566.
Act. 22.

Of the progress of the princesses of Este, and, indeed, of the whole family, in literature, perhaps it would not be easy to furnish a stronger proof than the following: In the year 1543, their father, Hercules II., was visited at Ferrara by Pope Paul III. Amongst other divertisements presented before his Holiness, “ a Latin comedy (the *Adelphi* of Terence) was recited with great grace by the children of the duke. The Princess Donna Anna, (born November 16. 1531) acted an enamoured youth; Donna Lucrezia, (born December 16. 1535) spoke the prologue; Donna Leonora, (born June 9. 1537) supported the person of a young girl; the Prince Don Alphonso, (born November 22. 1533) that of a youth; and prince Don Lewis, (born December 25. 1538), the part of a slave.” * All these children, except Anne, were thus under ten years of age; and it is probable, from the splendour of the occasion, that their performance was respectable. The court of Alphonso united, like the poem of Tasso, classic elegance with the richness of romance, and every thing conspired to kindle the fancy and refine the taste of the youthful bard.

Leonora of
Este.

Leonora of Este, the youngest of the princesses of Ferrara, had been confined by a long sickness, during the rejoicings on her brother's marriage; and like the still more celebrated Laura, appears to have been of a delicate constitution. This, while it diminished her bloom, had probably only rendered her more interesting; had bestowed on her features

* *Ant. Est.* tom. II. p. 368.

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A. D. 1566.
Act. 22.

that beautiful serenity, (*il bel sereno*,) or that pathetic and touching stillness, which we admire in the Magdalens of Guido. The numerous writers by whom she is mentioned, talk with rapture of her saintly goodness, of her genius, her impressive loveliness, and her early detachment from the vanities of life. *

To ladies of such a disposition as those I have mentioned, a young and accomplished poet, who had already celebrated them in his *Rinaldo*, found an easy introduction. Of Leonora, it would appear, Torquato became enamoured; and from a lady of such distinguished rank, a little condes-

* The two following stanzas, complimentary to Leonora, are taken from the *Ercole* of Giambatista Giraldi, whose long delayed attachment to the Muses has been mentioned. They were composed when that princess was very young. After praising her two sisters, the poet thus proceeds.

Sorella a queste due fia Leonora
 D'amendue lor minor d'anni e d'etade,
 Sarà tenuta e giudicata allora
 Costei tempio d'onor, e di castitade;
 Nè men di quello, che gran donna onora
 Dotata, che di senno di beltade;
 E sarà sì la sua presenza grata,
 Che parrà con le Grazie a un parto nata.
 Se riderà, se parlerà costei,
 Sempre le si vedrà modestia a paro,
 E il santo Amor sempre anderà con lei,
 Ch'altrove non avrà pegno più caro;
 Scesa parrà dal regno degli Dei,
 Perchè mirando il vago aspetto e raro,
 Imparino da lei gli umani cori,
 Come alma santa in mortal vel s'onori.

Can. X.

cension was sufficient to produce this effect on a susceptible heart. One of the principal elements of the complex passion of love is vanity; and the passion never rages with such fury, as when excited by an object of superior rank, and surrounded by the decorations of dignity and splendour. In an intercourse with a person of a different sex, there is, in persons of sensibility, a certain involuntary tenderness; and the conduct of Leonora to a handsome youth, distinguished by his genius, might undesignedly have a softness, extremely flattering to the presumption of early years. Probably, Tasso only wished to have an object which might attune his heart to that tenderness which is favourable to the visits of the Muse; probably his gratitude, which induced him to write verses on his patroness, assumed the tone of love. Certain, however, it is, that he composed verses in praise of Leonora, and that these verses are expressive, not merely of admiration, but almost of devotion.

E'en that blest day when first thy angel mien
I saw; and gaz'd upon thy look serene;
E'en then with double death my heart had died,
Had fear and wonder not their aid supplied;
Marble I stood—yet still thy beauty charm'd
Each frozen sense; and half the statue warm'd.*

* E certo il primo dì, che'l bel sereno
Della tua fronte agli occhi miei s'offerse,
E vidi armato spaziarvi Amore,
Se non che riverenza allor converse

CHAP. VI.

A. D. 1566.
Act. 22.

Tasso resumes
his Jerusalem.

The favour of the Princesses Lucretia and Leonora of Este, especially that of the former, who had much influence with the duke her brother, introduced to him the youthful poet, who now resolved to dedicate to that prince his *Jerusalem Delivered*. In order to do still farther honour to the family, he determined, besides interspersing compliments throughout the work, to fable the Achilles of his poem, *Rinaldo*, as a hero of the house of Este. * The *Jerusalem* accordingly was now resumed, which, after the sketch of a hundred and sixteen stanzas formerly mentioned, had been

E meraviglia in fredda selce il seno,
Ivi peria con doppia morte il core;
Ma parte degli strali e dell' ardore
Sentj pur anco entro'l gelato marmo.

Oper. vol. VI. p. 91.

The canzone from which the above lines are taken, *Mentre che a venerar movon le genti*, was first published in 1567, and, as we are informed by Torquato in the argument, was "one of three sisters, written to Madam Leonora of Este, his most distinguished patroness and benefactress." The other two were never published; perhaps, as is observed by Serassi, because they testified too clearly his attachment to that princess. This is probable; but if we may judge of them, from the one which has been published, they were the expression rather of gallantry than of love. See Appendix, (No. X.)

Goethe, author of the *Sorrows of Werter*, has written a play, entitled *Torquato Tasso*; which, though a work of genius, is chiefly remarkable for its historical accuracy. The description which Tasso gives of his emotions at first beholding the princess, and the impression made on his heart, is extremely beautiful. I shall subjoin the passage to the canzone to Leonora in the Appendix.

* To gratify, says Gibbon, the childish vanity of the house of Este, Tasso has inserted in his poem, and in the first crusade, a fabulous hero, the brave and amorous Rinaldo, (X. 75. XVII. 66, 94.) He might borrow his name from a Rinaldo, with the Aquila bianca Estense, who vanquished, as the standard-bearer of the Roman church, the Emperor Frederic I. (*Storia Imperiale* di Ricobaldo in Muratori, *Script. Ital.* tom. IX. p. 360. *Orlando Furioso*, III. 30.) But 1. The distance of sixty years between the youth of

laid aside for the space of two years. During that period Torquato had written his *Discourses on Heroic Poetry*; he had stored his fancy with many new ideas; he had acquired greater dignity of style; and his mind, as well as his body, had partaken of the progressive and mysterious vegetation of nature. He had come to reside at a court, where he saw assembled the flower of beauty and of chivalry, where knights contended at joust and tournament, and where scenes were exhibited, such as poets dream, and romances tell. The Turks too, at this period, dreadfully threatened Christendom; a hundred and fifty thousand of them had entered Hungary, and Alphonso was departing to assist the emperor, with all the pompous array of a fabulous Paladin.* But what ought to be principally remarked is, that Torquato found

the two Rinaldos destroys their identity. 2. The *Storia Imperiale* is a forgery of the Conte Boyardo, at the end of the 15th century. (Muratori, p. 281, 289.) 3. This Rinaldo and his exploits are not less chimerical than the hero of Tasso. (Muratori, *Antichità Estensi*, tom. I. p. 350.)—Gibbon's *Decline*, &c. V. p. 25. 4to.

* On the thirteenth of August this year (1566,) Alphonso left Ferrara, with a company of "three hundred gentlemen, armed at all points, with a sopravesta of various coloured velvet, embroidered with gold. Each of them was attended by a page, or squire, on horseback, who carried his lance and helmet, and was attired in the same manner."*** At Vienna, where the duke exhibited his troops before the emperor his relation, they were found to amount to four thousand persons, all of them mounted and furnished splendidly. In the midst of them appeared the duke himself upon a huge courser. He was preceded by five pages clothed in brocade, who bore five gilded lances, and by other five who carried as many helmets. The armour of Alphonso was of gilded steel, and he wore upon his head a black velvet cap shaded with plumes." Muratori *Antichità Estensi*, II. 395. The duke returned to Ferrara on the eighteenth of December 1566, after an absence of only four months.

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A. D. 1566.
Act. 22.

Progress of the
Jerusalem De-
livered.

at Ferrara the memory of Ariosto ; he courted the Muse amidst the scenes where she had lately been so propitious to that poet ; he might converse with some of his friends, and would visit his tomb. Encouraged by the favour of the duke, but especially by the more sweet and flattering kindness of the two princesses, Tasso composed his epic, with such diligence and felicity, that, in the space of a few months, he had completed five entire cantos. Sometimes he exchanged the trumpet for the lyre ; and if, like other great masters of the grand and sublime, he was somewhat less happy in the little and the sweet, it was impossible for him not to be successful in a considerable degree. His canzoni and sonnets, too, were complimentary to the princesses and other great personages ; and the accompaniment of flattery, which can embellish even the rudest melody, rendered infinite graces to the tones of Torquato.

Tasso revisits
Padua.

While thus agreeably occupied with composition, and advancing, by his songs and praise, in the favour of those whom it was his object to please, our poet heard that the cardinal, his master, resolved to continue at Rome during the summer. Accordingly, he determined to avail himself of this opportunity to visit Padua, and afterwards his father at Mantua. He departed in spring 1566, and was warmly received by Scipio Gonzaga, and his other friends at Padua ; whom he surprised and pleased, by reciting or reading to them the five cantos of the *Jerusalem* which he had now completed. I have already mentioned the adoption of Torquato into the academy *degli Eterei* ; and they resolving at

this time to publish a collection of their poetry, entreated him to favour them with some compositions to embellish the collection. He accordingly communicated to them thirty-eight sonnets, two madrigals, and two canzone, which were elegantly printed in their collection, first at Padua in 1567, and afterwards at Ferrara in 1588.

Of the situation of Torquato at this period, and the nature of his studies, he gives the following account, in a letter written from Padua to his relation Hercules Tasso: "If you wish to be informed of my condition, know that I am in the service of the cardinal of Este; that I am now in Padua upon some private affairs; and that I am going in a few days to Mantua, where I shall stay till the cardinal returns from Rome. In a short time will be published the *Rime* of the academy *degli Eterei*, in which will be some of my compositions that have not yet been printed. I have reached the sixth canto of *Godfrey*, and have written some dialogues and orations, in a style neither so humble as this letter, nor yet so like Boccaccio as some are pleased with, but which was never to my taste." *

Departing from Padua, our young poet went to Milan, and thence to Pavia, where he staid a month. After this he

* *Oper.* IX. p. 215. The dialogues here alluded to are, in the opinion of Serassi, *Il Ficino ovvero dell' Arte*, and *Il Minturno ovvero della Bellezza*, both of them very close imitations of Plato. A considerable portion of the life of Tasso was employed in writing dialogues in the manner of that philosopher, and I shall afterwards have occasion to speak of them at greater length. It is probable that the orations Tasso here speaks of are lost, since, except that on the death of Santini, all those which are now extant, were composed after this period.

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A. D. 1566.
Act. 22.The Flori-
dante.

visited his father at Mantua, who saw with delight his withering laurel vivified and augmented on the head of his son. *O qui complexus, et gaudia quanta fuerunt!* Bernardo was now very old; but, as the studies of youth are generally also the delight of old age, he was still engaged in writing poetry, and employed upon the *Floridante*, an extended episode of the *Amadigi*. The Muses, like other young ladies, loved the blooming and animated son better than the decayed and feeble father; but Torquato no doubt listened with attention to his father's verses, and did not withhold his commendation. Bernardo, we are told, considered his son as the more learned, but himself as the sweeter poet; and much as he loved and admired Torquato, who was undoubtedly his best work, yet such is human nature, that it is not improbable he secretly preferred the *Floridante* to the *Jerusalem Delivered*. *

1567.
Act. 23.

From Mantua it had been the intention of Tasso to go to Bergamo, on a visit to his aunt, the good nun Afra. Whether he executed this is uncertain, but if he did not, it was never again in his power, as she died on the twenty-ninth of January 1567. Hearing that the cardinal was on the point of returning to Ferrara, Torquato hastened thither, and, as he had acquired the good opinion of the princesses, they spoke

* Raccontandogli (a Bernardo) un giorno Annibale Magnocavallo in quanta riputazione fosse salito Torquato, eziando in concorrenza di lui; *Mio figliuolo*, rispose, *di dottrina mi avvanzerà, ma di dolcezza non mi giungerà mai.*

of him kindly to their brother. Amongst other favours, he was admitted to the table where the highest courtiers were entertained, often in company with the prince. * He at the same time studied to gain the affection of the most distinguished persons for rank, and especially for learning, who at that time frequented the court.

CHAP VI.

A. D. 1567.
Act, 23.

In May, this year, a circumstance happened, which probably gave occasion to one of the most distinguished poetical productions of Torquato. There was represented at Ferrara a pastoral fable, entitled *The Unfortunate*, *Lo Sfortunato*, which received wonderful applause. It was written by Agostino degli Arienti, a gentleman of that city; the principal character was acted by Verato, the Roscius of his age, and the representation was honoured by the presence of the Duke Alphonso, and of the Cardinal Lewis, to whom it was dedicated. Tasso was present at this exhibition, and perceiving the capability of a subject of this kind in the hands of an able artist, it is not improbable that he now conceived the idea of his *Aminta*, though he did not execute it till some years afterwards. Of all kinds of literary satisfaction, that of seeing one's works embellished by the magic of scenery, and by the truth of action; that of hearing the plaudits of an admiring audience, must be grateful to the mind. Arienti was not, however, the first who introduced

The Aminta.

* *Oper.* vol. IX. p. 342. X. p. 342. Torquato seems to have considered this as an affair of prodigious consequence. The courtiers of the lower order eat in their own chambers, and the lowest in the hall.

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A. D. 156 .
Act. 23.

shepherds on the stage ; four years before, the *Arethusa* of Lollo had been exhibited at Ferrara ; and in 1554, Agostino Beccari had written his *Sacrificio*, and dedicated it to the two princesses of Este, Lucretia and Leonora.

Like all other poets, Tasso was, in his youth, prone to love ; his sonnets were generally on that inexhaustible subject ; and he tells us himself, in sober prose, that “ his youth was quite subjected to amorous laws.”* Soon after his arrival at Ferrara, he became enamoured of Lucretia Bendidio, a young lady of singular beauty, and who, to many graces and accomplishments, added that of singing to perfection ; or, as Tasso expresses it in a sonnet, of “ binding the soul in chains of harmony.” This lady seems to have been a favourite with the poets of Ferrara, being celebrated not only by our bard,

Lucretia Bendidio.

* *Oper.* vol. VII. p. 456. *La mia giovinezza fu tutta sottoposta all'amorose leggi.* Milton, when, in his *Apology for Smectymnus*, he gives some account of his life, mentions in the following clouded manner his propensity to love : “ Having observed them, (the “ smooth Elegiac Poets,”) to account it the chief glory of their wit, in that they were ablest to judge, to praise, and by that could esteem themselves worthiest to love those high perfections, which under one or other name they took to celebrate ; I thought with myself, by every instinct and presage of nature, which is not wont to be false, that what emboldened them to this task, might with such diligence as they used, embolden me ; and that what judgment, wit, or elegance was my share, would herein best appear, and best value itself, by how much more wisely, and with more love of virtue, I should chuse (let rude ears be absent) the object of not unlike praises.*** Nor blame it readers in those [youthful] years, to propose to myself such a reward as the noblest dispositions above other things in this life have sometimes preferred ; whereof, not to be sensible when good and fair in one person meet, argues both a gross and shallow judgment, and withal an ungentle and swainish breast.

but also by Guarini and Pigna. The latter of these writers, who is known to a few readers of modern Latin verse, was a very formidable rival of Tasso, not on account of the sonnets which he composed, but because he was the secretary and favourite of the duke. "The minds of women," says Serassi, "are accustomed to sacrifice every thing to vanity and ambition;" and the favour and authority which Pigna enjoyed, imparted a value to his canzoni, which made them formidable rivals of the harmony and ardour of those of Torquato. He was now in a dangerous situation, and by the advice of some of his friends, and it would appear of the Princess Leonora herself, he not only ceased to write verses in the deification of Lucretia, as he expresses it, but even adopted the resolution of commenting and illustrating those of his rival. I know not whether we should attribute this to weakness or philosophy; if to the former, and that is most probable, let him who knows not the miseries of dependence cease to blame Torquato. Even his very genius had the effect of inthralling him; for feeling, as he did, that he was destined to write productions worthy of immortality, he must have been peculiarly anxious that the vicissitudes of fortune, and the cares of subsistence, should not destroy such delightful prospects. Tasso chose for the subject of his commentary three canzoni, and dedicated his work to Leonora of Este; a kind of presumption against the probability of the passion which he is said to have entertained for that princess, as he speaks of Lucretia, in his dedication, in a style of eulo-

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logy bordering on impiety. * Had Leonora of Este, too, felt at that time for the poet the passion which has been ascribed to her, it is not probable she would have commanded him to write on this subject, or have accepted the dedication of a temple raised to the glory of a rival.

These three canzoni, or “three sisters, (as they are called by our poet) which treat of divine love,” had no great beauty; but Tasso could easily communicate the graces he did not find. It has been remarked by a distinguished philosopher, in a letter on the subject of Burns, that men of genius are usually gentle in their criticisms. “I must not omit,” says he, “to mention what I have always considered as characteristic in a high degree of true genius, the extreme facility and good nature of his taste in judging of the compositions of others, where there was room for praise.” † I know not whether this circumstance may not be accounted for in the following manner: A very imperfect work may suggest many ideas to a man of fine genius; while reading it, he may be amused, perhaps, and delighted with his own creations; the pictures which it contains, will be strengthened and embellished by his fancy, and he will praise the work for perfections which he himself communicated to it. ‡

* *Oper.* vol. IX. p. 313.

† Stewart. See Currie's *Life of Burns*.

‡ This explanation was suggested to me by some remarks, page 7. in Mr Alison's admirable “*Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste*,” and I was afterwards confirmed in the opinion of its justness, by the following passage in the *Memoirs of Marmontel*. “L'un des beaux momens de Diderot c'étoit lorsqu'un auteur le consultoit sur son ouv-

Tasso found that Pigna was scarcely inferior to Petrarch, who, as he was among the first, so he is by far the best writer of sonnets; he draws a long comparison between them; and it appears, that if Petrarch excelled in sweetness and clearness, he was surpassed in variety of scientific conceits, depth, and obscurity. *

rage. Si le sujet en valoit la peine il falloit le voir s'en saisir, le pénétrer, et d'un coup-d'oeil découvrir de quelles richesses et de quelles beautés il étoit susceptible. S'il appercevoit que l'auteur remplit mal son objet au lieu d'écouter la lecture, il faisoit dans sa tête ce que l'auteur avoit manqué. Étoit-ce une piece de Théâtre? il y jetoit des scènes, des incidens nouveaux, des traits de caractère, et croyant avoir entendu ce qu'il avoit rêvé il nous vantoit l'ouvrage qu'on venoit de lui lire, et dans lequel lorsqu'il voyoit le jour nous ne retrouvions presque rien de ce qu'il en avoit cité."

Mémoires, tom. II. p. 313.

* *Oper.* vol. VI. p. 421. The consequence of Pigna, also, appears from the consideration, that Guarini collected all his different Italian *Rime*, and wrote for each of them a long and particular argument. This work was to have been dedicated to Leonora of Este, but it remained in MS., and, it is supposed, has perished. (Crescimbeni, *Stor. Volg. Poes.* vol. IV. p. 99.) The Latin verses of Pigna, many of which are printed in the *Delic. Poet. Ital.*, are better than his Italian compositions, which were harsh and inelegant.

In the *Aminta*, Il Pigna is complimented highly; and appears, as we shall see, as one of the characters, under the name of Elpino. He is described as a wonderful sage and poet, and as the worthy successor of *Quel grande che cantò l'armi, e gli amori*; that is of Ariosto. It appears, too, that the unfortunate Tasso, who is represented in the pastoral by Tirsi, had loved Lucretia prior to Pigna, but had withdrawn his claims.

Elpino. Quivi con Tirsi ragionando andava
Pur di colei, che ne l'istessa rete
Lui prima, e me dappoi ravvolse, e strinse;
E preponendo a la sua fuga, al suo
Libero stato, il mio dolce servigio."

Atto V.

We are told by Fontanini, (*Amint. difeso*, p. 376.) on the authority of an ancient MS. of Ferrara, that Pigna is described in the *Jerusalem* under the name of Alete, (Canto II. St. 58); and when we read that character, we will not wonder at his influence over Al-

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A. D. 1567.
Act. 23.Tasso disputes
on the subject
of love.

One of the principal arts taught in the schools at this, and long before this period, was the art of disputation; and it was usual for a literary champion to fix up certain *conclusions*, which he offered to defend against every comer. John Pico, Count of Mirandula, was a very formidable hero of this sort; and our own admirable Crichton won, we are told, a number of controversial trophies. Where nothing is known, every thing may be affirmed; and it was easy, on this account, and by sometimes denying the major, sometimes the minor proposition of the syllogism, to lengthen out a dispute to an indefinite period. Torquato, who seems to have been desirous of every kind of literary glory, resolved to support publicly, in the academy of Ferrara, fifty *Amorous Conclusions*; and he defended them three days, in presence of an illustrious assemblage of lords and ladies. Some of these *conclusions* were opposed in a very able manner, especially the twenty-first, which was impugned by Signora Cavalletta, a poetical lady of the court.* In this it is affirm-

phonso. Guarini also complains, in one of his letters, (Venez. 1615, in 8°. p. 97) that during the life of Pigna, his own verses had met with much neglect. Nothing is more injurious to genius than usurped reputations; they not only discourage true talents, but humiliate them, by shewing the injustice of those by whom glory is distributed.

* In compliment to this learned lady, who wrote fine verses, Tasso has given the title of *Cavalleua* to one of his dialogues, on the subject of Tuscan poetry, *Oper.* vol. VI. p. 462. The *Amorous Conclusions* are to be found, vol. VIII. p. 161. As to the controversy itself, it seems to have been a relic of those *courts* or *parliaments of love* which were held in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These appear to have arisen, partly from the idleness of the times, partly from the deference paid to the fair sex, and the then great importance of the passion of love, and partly from that inclination to scholastic debate which flourished so vigorously in those ages. These *courts of love* consisted of members

ed, that “*man loves more intensely, and with more stability, than woman;*” and it is evident that, upon a subject so general, no certain definite proposition can be made. I am inclined to think, that of the *conclusion* one half is commonly true, and the other false; and that if the love of man, while it lasts, is more ardent and intense, yet the woman has more of what is called attachment. When a man has once made himself master of the affections of a female, I believe that inconstancy is extremely rare; whether that her life has less variety, and that her thoughts, less distracted, fix themselves by often reposing, in seclusion and comparative idleness, on their favourite object; whether we are to attribute it to the merits of a sex, without which, as was happily said by a lady, the beginning of life would be without support, its middle without pleasure, and its close without consolation.

These *amorous conclusions* were dedicated by Torquato to Ginevra Malatesta, the early idol of his father, and who, now an old woman, must have been proud of this compliment from the son of her ancient worshipper. They would recall to her, but I know not with what emotions, those hap-

of both sexes, though the superiority was with the ladies; and their decisions were considered as solemn, inviolable, and precedents for future appeal. See this subject discussed at great length by De Sade. *Vie de Petrarque*, tom. II. Note xix.

The Cardinal de Richelieu caused Theses on Love to be argued in his palace, with all the forms used in the Sorbonne; and in the first sessions of the French Academy, many subjects relative to this passion were investigated. At a still later period, 1702, the Marquis Scipio Maffei supported, in imitation (as he tells us) of Tasso, a hundred conclusions concerning love, in the Philharmonic Society of Verona, before a great number of gentlemen and of ladies. Maffei, *Rime e Prose*, p. 121, &c. In Venezia, 1719, in 4°.

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Act. 23.

py days, when every eye that beheld her paused, and every bosom throbbed in her presence. They were illustrated with a commentary by Zuccolo, in the lifetime of our poet; and he himself, dissatisfied with some of them, wrought, several years afterwards, a few of those that he approved, into a dialogue, (*Il Cataneo ovvero delle Conclusioni*,) chusing rather, he says, to have for judges the literary world, and posterity in every age, than a theatre, however splendid, of courtly gentlemen and beautiful damsels.*

One of the principal objects of Torquato in the display above-mentioned, had been secretly to recommend himself to the favour of Lucretia Bendidio; and I am willing to hope, that his scholastic gallantry was agreeable to that lady. Few poets, I believe, have had the good or bad fortune to be married to the subjects of their songs; whether their ambition generally leads them to objects too illustrious; whether their general poverty precludes them from matrimony; whether the qualities of a mistress and wife are different, or that they often seek a theme merely for the purpose of fixing their ideas, and who is the admiration of the poet, not of the man. The beautiful Lucretia married into the house of the Macchiavelli, and the poet gained nothing for his sighs and his poetry but friendship; an acquisition agreeable, indeed, and useful, where nothing else is expected,

* *Opere*, vol. VIII. p. 137.

but unavailing and unsatisfying as a recompence for love.

CHAP. VI.

A. D. 1569.
Act. 25.

In the beginning of August 1569, Torquato received the afflicting intelligence, that his father was dangerously ill at Ostia, upon the Po, of which he had been made governor by the Duke of Mantua. He hastened thither with all the eagerness of affection, and found the old man oppressed with sickness, and with the burden of seventy-six years. The house in which he lived was in the greatest disorder, for in his helpless state he had been robbed by his servants; and Torquato had not only to take upon himself the superintendence of the household affairs, for which he was not extremely well qualified, but had even to disburse, from his own almost empty pocket, the necessary expences. On the fourth of September 1569, Bernardo was removed to a better life.

Sickness and

Death of Bernardo Tasso.

*Better, indeed, to die, and fairly give
Nature her debt, than disappointed live;
With each new sun, to some new hope a prey,
And still to-morrow false, than to-day.*

Torquato, oppressed with grief, and the vigils and labours he had undergone, sickened two days afterwards.* As soon as he had a little recovered, he hastened back to Ferrara, unwilling to remain in a place which had witnessed the death of his father, and which recalled only

* *Oper.* vol. IX. p. 239.

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ideas of the most melancholy kind. On his return he wrote the following letter to the Duke of Urbino, to whom he thought it proper to signify his loss. *

“ To the Sig. Duke of Urbino.

It has pleased God to recall to himself, on the fourth of September, the blessed spirit of my father; and though his age was mature, yet his death has given me inexpressible affliction. I persuade myself that your excellency will sympathize with my loss, as you shewed by your benefits that you counted him among the most valuable of your servants, and as you were well acquainted how much he was attached to you. But of this attachment, and of his infinite obligations, I willingly remain heir; and if your excellency shall extend to me that protection with which he was favoured, I shall consider him as having left me a sufficiently ample patrimony. I pray God to grant a happy issue to all your excellency's intentions; and so, with all humility, I kiss your hands.

From Ferrara, the 28th of September 1569.”

In another letter, written by Tasso on the same day, to Count Felix Paciotto, he gives a more particular account of the death of Bernardo. “On the fourth of September,” says he,

* *Opus.* vol. IX. p. 197.

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the life of Ber-
nardo.

“the long and anxious life of my father was brought to a close. His soul was united to his body by bonds so tenacious, that it separated itself painfully, and with the utmost difficulty; but though the sufferings, which he testified by his groans, were most bitter, he died, as far as I could judge, patiently, and with a saintly disposition.”* Thus closed the life of Bernardo Tasso, which certainly cannot be considered as fortunate. I pity not the man who has only little, if that little be secure; but nothing can be more painful than a condition which at once is uncertain and dependent. Goldsmith considered the Swiss as happy, because the meanness of his cottage is shamed by no contiguous palace; but the man who resided, like Bernardo, in a petty court, must, in addition to dependence and uncertainty, have always had his feelings of inferiority awakened by contrast. He would probably experience at times the proud man’s contumely; or, what is still more painful, his self-approving condescension. But though the tissue of his life was by no means fortunate, Bernardo had also experienced joys which are denied to the greater part of mankind. A considerable portion of his life had been employed in composition; and it is in the delight attending this labour, that the man of genius finds his most certain, and most pleasing reward. He enjoyed a considerable reputation, and he hoped for more than he enjoyed. He had lived, (for a short time, indeed, but he had lived,)

* *Opus.* vol. IX. p. 239.

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with a woman whom he adored ; and for how many afflictions, for how many sufferings, was this a recompense ! Lastly, he was a father, and of what a son ! fortunate, too, in this, that he was removed while he beheld only the glory of his Torquato, without living to witness his reason clouded, and his happiness destroyed. *

* The life both of Bernardo and of his son, or rather the life of almost every literary man in the days of patronage, attests the wisdom of Seneca's advice in the following admirable lines.

Ingentes Dominos, et famæ nomina claræ,
 Illustrique graves nobilitate domos
 Devita, et longè cautus fuge : contrahe vela,
 Et te littoribus cymba propinqua vehat.
 In plano tua sit semper fortuna, paresque
 Noveris. Ex alto magna ruina venit.
 Non benè cum parvis junguntur grandia rebus :
 Stantia namque premunt, præcipitata ruunt.
 Mitte superba pati fastidia, spemque caducam
 Despice ; vive tibi, nam moriere tibi.

CHAPTER VII.

*Marriage of Lucretia of Este.—The Cardinal her brother visits France, and is accompanied by Tasso.—Memorial left by that Poet at his departure, and state of his affairs.—He is introduced to Charles IX., and graciously received.—Writes a discourse, in which he compares France and Italy.—Incurs the displeasure of the Cardinal, and returns to Rome.—Is received into the service of the Duke of Ferrara.—Writes his *Aminta*, which is acted at Court.—Remarks on this Pastoral.*

A. D. 1570 — 1573.

ÆT. 26 — 29.

IN winter 1570, an event happened, which was considered as of great importance at the court of Ferrara. This was the marriage of Francis Maria della Rovere, Prince of Urbino, with Lucretia of Este; an union which was earnestly desired by his father Guidubaldo, and by her brother Alphonso. Nobody seemed to have any objection but the

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young man, who stickled a little at the circumstance that his intended bride was fifteen years older than himself. Lucretia was now arrived at the respectable age of thirty-six ; and, though extremely capable of exciting love in the breast of a courtier or dependant dazzled by her rank, one can hardly blame a young man, who was her equal, if he wished that she had visited the world a little later. However, the prince went to Ferrara towards the end of January, and as, though the first bloom of the lady was past, she was still very interesting, as he was received with great courtesy and kindness, and as he probably did not wish to displease his father, “ he shewed himself,” says Serassi, “ fully contented.” *Egli se ne mostrò contento pienamente.*

Marriage of
Lucretia of
Este.

Contentment is a sentiment extremely valuable to its possessor ; but it is of that calm and passive kind, which is not the most gratifying to the feelings of a bride. The young man, however, conducted himself as if actuated by sentiments more suitable to the occasion ; for in less than a month after he beheld Lucretia, a gentleman of the court of Urbino was sent to espouse her in his name. In the course of the year she was conducted to the court of Guidubaldo ; and soon afterward, her youthful husband tore himself from her embraces, for the purpose of engaging in a crusade against the Turks. *

* In the course of a few years after their marriage, a separation took place between the Duke and Duchess of Urbino, followed soon afterwards by a divorce. “ La cause de ce divorce (says Amelot de la Houssaye, in a note to Cardinal Ossat’s Lettres,) etoit

It is one of the miseries of a court-poet, that he is forced to write on occasional subjects; to invoke Lucina and Hymen at the birth or marriage of any of the family of his patrons; and, like the mourners at a funeral, to lament deaths which are often uninteresting to every body, and sometimes even a subject of joy. Thus, among the works of such a poet, are a number of occasional pieces, the value of which is short and temporary; as the duration of a composition is generally limited by that of its subject. A man of genius, too, is commonly less capable of constraint than one who is not so; and nothing is more different than writing well to please one's self, and writing well to please another. Tasso was not exempted from this misery; though, to employ him on temporary subjects, was like employing Michael Angelo to form statues of snow. On the occasion of these nuptials, he composed a canzone, and was rewarded by the attention, and even by some presents, of the prince and prin-

que la duchesse sa femme, avoit douze [quinze] ans plus que lui, et qu'ainsi le duc désespéroit d'en avoir des enfans. Il avoit été marié du vivant de son pere, qui s'étoit hâté de faire ce mariage pour en rompre un autre, que le prince avoit promis en Espagne à une dame, qui n'étoit pas de sa qualité." Tom. I. p. 487, edit. 1698.

"Poco felice col tempo, (says Muratori) riuscì questo matrimonio, [of the Duke of Urbino and Lucretia of Este] perchè entrò ben presto la Gelosia e la discordia a rompere la loro unione, di maniera che questa principessa, condotta ad Urbino nell' Anno appresso, se ne tornò ben tosto a Ferrara e benchè seguisse dipoi la loro riunione, pure non durò, e ritornata alla patria, vi dimorò fino alla morte. I veri motivi di tal separazione non sono a me noti, la voce nondimeno comune fu, che avendo quel principe mancato alla fede maritale con pregiudizio della salute della consorte, o pure essendogli scappato qualche motto intorno alla maggiore età d'essa principessa: questa impaziente si ritirasse alla casa paterna. Altri nondimeno ne attribuirono a lei la colpa." *Ant. Est.* tom. II. p. 396.

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cess.* Notwithstanding so many distractions, however, he had never lost sight of his great work, which, as Virgil had done, he first sketched out in prose; giving occasionally to such parts as pleased him, the charms of colouring and harmony. At the opening of the academy of Ferrara, he pronounced an oration, which still remains, and in which he commends Alphonso, who was one of his auditors, for his great attention to arms; encouraging him also to bestow a like fostering care on literature and science.†

The Princess
Leonora.

After the departure of the Duchess of Urbino, Tasso, whose attention was now undivided, paid his court to Leonora, her sister, with greater assiduity. This lady had been all her life averse to pomp and shew, and lived in a very retired and simple manner. Her principal delight was literature, and the conversation of literary men; and as Tasso was distinguished above all others in talents, was very handsome, and, besides, extremely courteous and agreeable in his manners, it was no wonder that she received him in a favourable manner. “But whoever,” says Serassi, “dares to affirm, that Madam Leonora had a weakness towards Torquato, wrongs, in a very high degree, the virtue of that sage and most pious princess. Such was the idea of her purity in

* *Oper.* vol. X. pp. 299, 164.

† *Oper.* vol. VIII. p. 269: It is proper to warn my reader, that in the assertion I have just now made, that Tasso first sketched his *Jerusalem* in prose, I have followed Serassi (page 149). In proof of it, he quotes a memorial, which will immediately be given at length, but which is by no means decisive of a literary fact of such importance.

Ferrara, that it was attributed principally to the efficacy of her prayers, that the city was not overwhelmed by the Po, and totally destroyed by that earthquake which shook it for several months, to the incredible terror of every one." * CHAP. VII.
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I have already mentioned, that the ecclesiastics of the family of Este generally held some rich benefices in France, together with those they had in Italy. From a very early period indeed, the house of Ferrara had been attached to that of France, and the subsisting union had been increased by intermarriages. † The Cardinal Lewis, in addition to the

* This earthquake began the night of the seventeenth of November 1570, and continued, with different degrees of violence, during the remainder of that and part of the following year. The service rendered by the Princess Leonora on this occasion, as well as on that of a deluge of the Po, is frequently mentioned in the book of poems, written by different authors on her death. Thus, in a sonnet of Filippo Binaschi :

Quando del Pò tremar l'altre sponde
Ferrara danneggiando e dentro, e fuora :
Un sol prego di Te, casta Leonora,
Spense l'ire del ciel giuste e profonde.

And, at page 25., a sonnet of Flamminio Papazzoni terminates with the following *terzetto* :

Che s'el diluvio, al tuo pregar, dell'acque .
E'l tremar della terra anco si rese ;
Fian per noi dunque i preghi istessi invano ?

As the generality of writers have attributed to his passion for this princess the distraction of Tasso. and his imprisonment by Alphonso, I shall examine the grounds of this belief at some length in the sequel. The argument of Serassi, that Leonora was a devotee, and therefore not a lover, is not very irrefragable.

† In the year 1431, Charles VII. of France, permitted Nicholas III. of Este, to add to the arms of Este the golden lilies of France, " ayans congnoissance de la uray amour et affection, que icelluy nostre cousin, et ses Predecesseurs ont tousiours eue a la couronne

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Cardinal Lewis
resolves to take
Tasso to
France.

archbishopric of Auch, which had been resigned to him by the Cardinal Ippolito his uncle, held in that country several rich abbeys, which he was now desirous to visit. Probably too, he wished, by his dignity and talents, to lend some aid to the Catholic religion, which was at that time struggling hard for victory. Among the gentlemen of his train, he resolved to take Torquato, partly on account of his society, and partly perhaps because he knew it would be agreeable to his cousin Charles IX. who, as he was fond of poetry, and himself a versifier, would be glad to see one of the greatest poets of Italy. * Tasso was extremely happy at this reso-

de France." Muratori, *Ant. Est.* vol. II. 195. Torquato, while celebrating an enterprise, of which a French hero was the leader, was doing a thing agreeable to his patrons. His father Bernardo, too, had always a predilection for France. (*Lettere*, vol. II. pp. 405, 412.) and a dislike to Spain; nor was the good will of either father or son encreased by the reception of the *Amadigi*.

* Charles, says D'Alembert, wrote verses "dont on n'auroit peut-être jamais parlé s'ils n'eussent été d'un Souverain." This decision is too harsh, as will appear from the following lines of that prince to the poet Ronsard, "Je doute," says the Abbé de Sade, "que le seizieme siecle ait vu éclore de plus beaux vers." (*Vie de Petrarque*, II. Append. Note XIV.)

L'art de faire des vers, dût on s'en indigner,
Doit être à plus haut prix que celui de régner.
Tous deux également nous portons des couronnes;
Mais, Roi, Je les reçois, Poète, tu les donnes.
Ton esprit enflammé d'une céleste ardeur,
Eclate par soi-même et moi par ma grandeur.
Si du côté des Dieux je cherche l'avantage,
Ronsard est leur mignon, et Je suis leur image.
Ta lyre qui ravit par de si doux accords,
S'asservit les esprits dont Je n'ai que les corps.
Elle t'en rend le maître, et se sçait introduire,
Où le plus fier tyran ne peut avoir d'empire.

lution, not only as the journey would afford him a wider view of life and manners, but, as he was occupied with the composition of his *Jerusalem*, it was natural for him to wish to see a kingdom, of which his Hero, Godfrey, was a native.

Prior to the departure of our bard, he left the following instrument in the hands of Hercules Rondinelli, a gentleman of Ferrara, and one of his most intimate friends. It is extremely curious, as affording a melancholy picture of the finances, and I fear of the imprudence of Torquato, who imitated, and, as in other points, greatly excelled his father in negligence of pecuniary affairs.

*Memorial left by Tasso,
on
his departure to France.*

“ Since life is frail, and it may please Almighty God to dispose of me in this my journey to France, it is requested of Sig. Hercules Rondinelli, that he will in this case undertake the management of the following concerns.

“ And first, with regard to my compositions, it is my wish, that all my own love sonnets, and madrigals, should be collected, and published ; but with regard to those, whether amorous or otherwise, which I have written for any friend, my request is, that they should all be buried with myself, save this one only, *Or che l'aura mia dolce altrove spira*. * I wish the publication of the oration spoken in Ferrara at the opening of the academy ; of the four books on Heroic Poetry ; of

* See Appendix, (No. XI.)

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the six last cantos of the *Godfrey* ; and those stanzas of the two first which shall seem least imperfect. * All these compositions, however, are to be submitted to the review and consideration of Sig. Scipio Gonzaga ; of Sig. Domenico Veniero ; and of Sig. Battista Guarini ; who, I persuade myself, will not refuse this trouble, when they consider my friendship and observance towards them.

“ Let them be informed too, that it was my intention that they should cut and hew without mercy, whatever should appear to them either rotten or superfluous. As to additions or changes, however, let them proceed more cautiously, since, after all, the poem would remain imperfect. With regard to my other compositions, if there are any which to the aforesaid Sig. Rondinelli and the other gentlemen shall seem not unworthy of publication, let them be disposed of according to their will.

“ As to my property, I wish that what part of it I have pledged to Abram . . . for twenty-five livres (lire ;) and seven pieces of arras, which are likewise in pledge to Sig. Ascanio for thirteen scudi ; † that these, and whatever I have in this house, should be sold ; and that of the residue, the following

* From this passage, Serassi unwarrantably affirms, that Tasso did not compose his poem in direct progression ; [seguitamente ;] but it appears to me probable, that Tasso here means the second and eight cantos inclusive. In this case, however, his progress for some years must have been very slow. See page 139.

† Sig. Ascanio was a Jew, named Giral dini, and the other pawn-broker seems, from his name, to have been of the same people. This arras, which has formerly been mentioned, was probably the only property left by Bernardo. I have translated *lire livres*, though their value is less, each of them amounting to little more than eight-pence.

epitaph should be inscribed on a monument to my father, whose body is in S. Polo. And should an impediment take place in any of these matters, I entreat Sig. Hercules to have recourse to the favour of the most excellent Madam Leonora, whose liberality I confide in, for my sake.

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I Torquato Tasso have written this, Ferrara 1570.

BERNARDO TAXO MVSR. OCIO ET PRINCIPVM.

NEGOTIIS SVMMA INGENII VBERTATE ATQVE

EXCELLENTIA PARI FORTVNAE VARIETATE

AC INCONSTANTIA RELICTIS VTRIVSQVE IN-

DVSTRIAE MONVMENTIS CLARISSIMO

TORQVATVS FILIVS POSVIT.

VIXIT AN. SEPTVAGINTA ET SEX OBI. AN. MDLXIX.

DIE IV. SEPTEMB.

Torquato departed to France with his lord about the end of the year 1570; for it appears from a brief of Pius V. written to that cardinal on the third of February 1571, that he was then at the court of Charles IX. Probably his arrival was in January 1571; for Tasso mentions, in his account of France, that he had suffered during two months an insupportable cold in that kingdom, and that one day a change so rapidly took place, that it seemed to have passed without any interval, from January to April. By the cardinal, Torquato was introduced to the king as the bard of Godfrey, and of the heroes of France, who had signalized themselves at the siege of Jerusalem. In general, the French writers agree, that his reception at the court of Charles was flattering; and this ought naturally to have been the case, as the

Tasso goes to
France.

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Is introduced
to Charles IX.

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king was fond of poetry ; as Tasso was so illustrious ; and as the subject of his divine work was so extremely honourable and interesting to that monarchy. It is said, that he even was so foolish as to reject considerable presents, which were offered him by Charles. These presents, however, it is probable, were not very princely, as that monarch (according to Brantome,) was in the habit of saying, that poets ought to be treated like horses, fed, but not fattened. *Il est dange-reux*, says Chamfort, *pour un Philosophe attaché à un Grand, de montrer tout son désintéressement ; on le prendrait au mot.* This seems to have been the case with Tasso, who probably, from a parade of disinterestedness, refused gifts which his heart was yearning to receive. He appears to have been of the disposition of Burns, who at one time considers it as prostitution to receive an honest remuneration for his labours, and at another is forced to demand as charity, what he might more than have claimed as his right. The man who really wishes to be independent, though he will not stoop for worlds, to what would debase the honest haughtiness of his nature, yet he will be assiduous, by attention to worldly interests, to shelter himself from that indigence, which would expose him to contumely and to mean supplication. In the mild climate of Greece, where wants were few ; where philosophy, or what resembled it, was rare and in esteem ; where wealth was exposed to envy and danger, and where frequent revolutions overthrew the rich and powerful ; in such a climate, and among such a people, it might be prudent to retire from a palace to a tub : but the modern philosopher ought not to despise riches, but endeavour to possess them.

Balzac tells us, in his *Conversations*, I know not upon what authority, that Tasso, while at the court of France, was compelled by poverty to request a crown in alms from a lady of his acquaintance. This I suppose is told merely *pour egayer les choses*, for it has not much the air of probability. A story more flattering to the consequence of our bard, is related to show his influence with Charles IX., who was induced by him (it tell us,) to pardon a poet that had been guilty of some enormous crime. Much interest was made for the criminal, but the king ordered him for execution, and had sworn that he would resist all the entreaties of those who requested his pardon. “I come, sire,” said Torquato, “to demand the speedy punishment of a man, who has shown that human nature is more powerful than the precepts of philosophy.” The king, struck with this view of the matter, and being, says Serassi, of a gentle and magnanimous temper, *come gentile e magnanimo ch’egli era*, graciously pardoned the criminal.* The defence was not very excellent, as it

* That the disposition of Charles IX. was naturally good, is affirmed by almost every historian, and his fate ought to be held up as a terrible example of the effects of education. “Princeps, says Thuanus, præclara indole, et magnis virtutibus; nisi quatenus eas prava educatione, et matris indulgentiâ corruptit.

Bientôt Charles lui-même en fût saisi d’horreur;
Le remord dévorant s’éleva dans son cœur,
Des premiers ans du Roi la funeste culture,
N’avait que trop en lui corrompu la Nature;
Mais elle n’avait point étouffé cette voix,
Qui jusques sur le trône épouvante les rois.

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would extend benefit of clergy to every literary culprit, and those only would be exempted from mercy, whose condition and disadvantages rendered their crimes more venial.

Ronsard.

Among the distinguished persons at that time in France, Torquato was particularly pleased with Peter Ronsard, whose writings he highly admired. This poet was for a considerable time greatly celebrated ; but he misunderstood the genius of his language ; he was a bad Grecian in his odes, and a bad Italian in his sonnets. At this period, he was preparing an edition of his works, which soon after appeared, with an elegant preface by his admirer, Muretus. Tasso was shown the first volumes by the author ; and, as he highly esteemed his taste and talents, it is probable he communicated to him his *Jerusalem*, and other compositions. Du-

Par sa mère élevé, nourri dans ses maximes,
Il n'étoit point comme elle endurci dans les crimes.
Le chagrin vint fletrir la fleur de ses beaux jours,
Une langueur mortelle en abrégea le cours ;
Dieu deployant sur lui sa vengeance sévère,
Marqua ce roi mourant du sceau de sa colère ;
Et par son châtiment, voulût épouvanter
Quiconque à l'avenir oserait l'imiter.
Je le vis expirant. Cette image effrayante,
A mes yeux attendris semble être encore présente ;
Son sang à gros bouillons de son corps élané,
Vengeoit le sang Français par ses ordres versé ;
Il se sentait frappé d'une main invisible,
Et le peuple étonné de cette fin terrible
Plaignit un roi si jeune, et si tôt moissonné,
Un roi par les méchans dans le crime entraîné.

La Henriade, Chant. 3me.

ring his journey, he had never ceased meditating on his great work, and part of it was composed in the abbey of Châlis, which was held *in commendam* by the Cardinal Lewis of Este. *

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While in France, Torquato was requested by Count Hercules Contrari of the court of Ferrara, to send him some account of the country, and of the manners of the people. This he effected in a letter, or discourse of considerable length, in which he compares France and Italy. After a rather tedious introduction, he observes, that it cannot be doubted, that every country, according to its latitude, produces men with a different degree of genius and inclination. That those of the south are weak and timid, though ingenious ; whereas the people of the north are obtuse and stupid, but fierce and warlike. They, says he, of the middle climes are best, and, in proportion as they approach the two extremes, they partake of the qualities produced by those extremes. Thus the Greeks are more subtle, and less courageous, than the Italians, who, in their turn, excel the French in a disposition for the arts. On this hypothesis, to which, about the middle of last century, considerable credit was given by Montesquieu, Tasso dwells at much length ; and he tells us, that he imagines that the inconstancy of the French nation is owing to the inconstancy of their climate. As to personal

Tasso writes a comparison between France and Italy.

* The Abbe de Charnes, who has written an agreeable but incorrect life of Tasso, extracted from Manso, thus expresses himself, when speaking of the poet's journey to France, "Ce voyage ne retarda point la composition de son p^oeme. Tout à cheval et en chemin faisant il en laissoit échaper de bons morceaux."

Vie du Tasse, p. 39. Paris, 1695.

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beauty, Torquato acknowledges that the French have better complexions than the Italians; particularly the ladies, whose faces unite with fine lineaments a very lively carnation. The noble French youth, he says, are extremely slender in the legs, in proportion to their bulk, a circumstance which he attributes to their exercising so much on horseback. The season, during the time Torquato was in France, was so malignant, that there was scarcely any wine that was not tart and unripe; "but from what I can perceive," says he, "of those in past years, the French wines are more generous and digestible than those of Italy; and, what is their highest praise, are powerful without intoxicating. What, however, I desire in wine is a something which either soothes or bites the tongue and palate; or which produces both these effects at once. I confess the imperfection of my taste, to which the sweet and poignant wines of Italy are more agreeable than those of France, all of which (I speak of the good ones) seem to me to have the same flavour, so that I can with difficulty distinguish the one from the other." *

In the plenty and variety of animal food, the Italians yield to the French, and also in abundance of grain; but with regard to fruits, Italy, he says, is infinitely superior; those of France being few and bad. He praises next the greatness and abundance of rivers in this latter country, their calm majesty, and the facility they furnish to navigation from one district to another. Those of Italy, except

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 450.

the Po, are rather occasional torrents than rivers; and even the Po is subject to frequent inundations, nor is there any communication between the east and west of Italy, except by the Appenines, or by a long tract of sea. He then enters into a discussion on the effect of mountainous countries in producing hardihood and courage; quotes the Swiss as proofs; and therefore prefers the Italians, who live in a mountainous, to the French, who dwell in a level country. In France, indeed, the nobles are in the highest degree generous; but the people, especially the Parisians, mean and base; and, indeed, says he, in level countries the nobility, who can nourish a number of horses, and exercise themselves in jousts, can easily subject the people; whereas mountainous countries are favourable to liberty.

As to the relative beauty of the two countries, except as far as concerns rivers, Torquato thinks there can be no dispute. The noble mountains, the venerable forests, and winding bays in Italy, are infinitely superior to what can be seen in France. Nature has included, in the former of these countries, whatever is to be found in the world, and, therefore, if variety be pleasing, it must be delightful beyond all others. The cities of Italy, continues he, are much better built than those of France; the private houses, in the latter country, are, for the most part, of wood, and constructed without any attention to architecture or convenience. You ascend by narrow winding stairs, which make the head dizzy, into dark and melancholy apartments, nor is there such a thing to be seen as a suite of rooms. The churches, however, he tells us, are numerous, vast, and magnificent; but our

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poet does not seem an admirer of the French Gothic architecture, though he praises highly the steeples and richly painted windows.*

Torquato concludes his letter with the following curious remarks: "There are three customs of the French with which I am dissatisfied. The first, which is extremely barbarous, is, that the people in some places commonly nourish infants with the milk of cows. The marrow of lions, or of other ferocious animals, as is feigned of Achilles and Ruggiero, would be much more suitable; for the cow is a servile animal, and patient, not only of labour, but of blows. Now, the nourishment which is received in that age impresses something, I know not what, of its qualities on the tender bodies and minds of infants; and if physicians or politicians will not admit as nurses, women who are infirm, or of a bad temper and conduct, how much less would they accept of brutes? But as I abhor this practice of the common people, so I do not praise that of the nobles, each of whom lives in a retired manner in his castle, far from the crowds of cities. For, not to mention that man is a social animal, fitted for civil life, and that solitude is of no use, except for the purpose of contemplation, I may remark,

* I say of the *French* Gothic architecture, which differs widely from that in England. "I am informed," says Mr Gray, "by a very competent judge, that the resemblance between Gothic architecture in England and France, is surprisingly slight, except in the cathedral at Amiens, and a few other churches, supposed to be built by the English while in possession of French provinces."—*Letter in Mason's Life of Gray.*

that the nobleman, living for the most part with slaves and villains, accustoms himself to imperiousness and insolence. On the other hand, the low people of the cities, having little connection with those in whom there is any elegance or polish, are confirmed in that baseness of mind and manners, affixed to them by the meanness of their birth. I know that this practice is common in Germany, and other foreign countries; and that it may be replied, that the nobles often in courts, and in visits to each other, may converse together. With this answer, however, I am dissatisfied; and I suspect their dislike to towns arises from pride, and unwillingness to consider the magistrates as their superiors. The third custom which I cannot praise is, that literature, but especially the sciences, is abandoned by the nobles; for philosophy, like a royal dame married to a slave, loses much of her dignity when consigned to plebeian minds. Instead of being a liberal inquirer into causes, she becomes, in the hands of the populace, obtuse and devoid of authority; and, from a queen and governess of men, descends to be a handmaid to sordid arts, and a purveyor to the vile hunger of avarice.” *

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 456. Bertrand du Guesclin, the flower of French chivalry, could not read a syllable. “ Riens (says the writer of his life) ne savoit de lettres, ne oncques n’avoit trouvé maistre de qui il se laissast doctiner, mais les vouloit tousjours fêrir et frapper.” (*Hist. de du Guesclin*, ed. de Ménard, p. 34.) His example seems to have been followed by the young nobility of France, as we learn from the following complaint of Alain Chartier. “ Ceulx sont duis aux aises privées et conduits en la paresseuse négligence, qui sont ordonnez pour travailler au commun bien, ainsi que s’ils estoient seulement nez à boire et à manger, et le peuple fait pour les honorer. Plus y a, car ce fol

CHAP. VII.

A. D. 1571.
Act. 27.

Tasso loses the
favour of Car-
dinal Lewis.

It appears that Torquato, while in France, had paid considerable attention to what was going on, as he several years afterwards wrote a discourse, which remains unpublished, on the troubles of that country. Whether he had not been sufficiently cautious in expressing his sentiments, or that the attendants of the cardinal, who envied his talents and consideration, calumniated him to that prince, he experienced a great change in his behaviour, and no longer partook of his wonted liberality.* In general, men of genius are ill

langage court aujourd' hui parmi les curiaux [courtisans] que noble homme ne doit savoir les lettres, et tiennent à reprouche de gentillesse bien lire ou bien escrire. Las! qui pourroit dire plus grant folie, ni plus perilleux erreur publicq?"

Oeuvres, ed. de Duchesne, p. 316.

* In an unpublished letter of Tasso, (which was in the possession of Serassi,) and in which that poet endeavours to investigate the causes of the cardinal's displeasure, he considers, as one of them, the zeal which he shewed in France for the Catholic religion. "O per isdegno che in Francia io volessi far maggiore professione di Cattolico di quel che ad alcuni suoi ministri paresse ch'io facessi," &c. This, upon which Serassi makes no remark, was probably the cause. The year 1571 was spent, in France, in preparations for the infernal massacre of St Bartholomew. For this purpose the Protestants were treated with such singular favour, that even the pope himself was deceived, and complained bitterly of the conduct of the king. Margaret, the sister of Charles IX., the lover and intended wife of the young Duke of Guise, was given to the prince of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV., and the family of Guise was banished in seeming disgrace from the court. Torquato, therefore, both as a zealous Catholic, and attached to that family, probably spoke his sentiments with his usual openness of character, being altogether ignorant of the dreadful secret.

See Davila, libro V.

That Tasso took considerable interest in the struggles of parties in France, appears from some stanzas in his *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, (Can. XX. p. 76, 77, 80) and the edition of Angelier, 1595, which contained them, was condemned and suppressed by a decree of the Parliament of Paris.

Preuves des Libertez de l'Eglise Gallicane, 1651, fo. tom. I. p. 154.

constituted for the part of courtiers ; they possess often an unbending dignity, which unfits them for servility and adulation ; for a scene, where to live they must have interests, and not opinions. To subsist in such a situation, they must become dupes to the object of their homage, must accept condescension as friendship, and sometimes suffer degradation, not for a benefit, but for a hope. Hence, it is probable, nothing can be more painful than for a man of genius to live in a court, especially if that court be a petty one. As a tragedian, who acts an emperor in a barn, is forced, from the want of decoration, to exaggerate the strut and rant of majesty, a small prince, with great connections, must never forget his grandeur, lest others should take him at his word, and forget it likewise. Such were the princes of Ferrara, proud and pompous ; so that we may judge of the uneasy situation of Torquato, who was proud also, possessed of that candour and simplicity of character, which leads to the utterance of natural sentiments in a natural manner ; and who, if his patrons erred with regard to any tenet of the Platonic philosophy, probably took the unnecessary trouble of putting them in the right. Grieved and indignant at the behaviour of the cardinal, our poet demanded leave of return, which was readily granted. Balzac affirms, that after having staid a year in France, Tasso, having made no addition to his wardrobe, departed in the same suit which he had brought ; so that Voltaire had good reason to laugh at the pompous representations of the honours paid him in that country, which are given by some of the Italian writers.

CHAP. VII.

A. D. 1571.
Act, 21.

CHAP. VII.

A. D. 1571.

Act. 27.

If the residence of Tasso in France had been useful in shewing him the spectacle of a magnificent court, and extending his views of nature and of life, his departure at this period was fortunate for himself, and perhaps for the admirers of his poem. Had he lingered a few months longer, he would have witnessed the terrible scenes of St Bartholomew ; his feelings must have been wounded in the highest degree ; the view of Fanaticism, armed with her poniard, might have disgusted him with religion ; and he would have ceased, perhaps, to describe a war, of which piety (which he had considered as the cause) might be only the pretence.

1572.

Act. 28.

Leaves France.

The departure of our poet from France, where he had resided during 1571, took place about the close of that year. He travelled in company with Manzuoli, secretary of his late lord, and arrived at Rome in January 1572. In that city he was well received, both for his own and his father's sake, especially by Cardinal Albano, a native of Bergamo, who had been lately promoted to the purple by Pius V. By this prelate he was much caressed, and by Maurice Cataneo, his secretary, who had been acquainted with Tasso from his childhood.* He had the honour, too, of kissing the feet of Pius V., a prince distinguished by the severity of his life, and to whom, in 1570, he had testified his homage, by invoking, in a Latin ode, the Clouds, in the time of a great

* According to Manso, Cataneo was the tutor of Tasso at Rome, (see p. 33.) a circumstance which is strenuously denied by Serassi. *Vita del Tasso*, p. 59. What is certain is, that Cataneo was a very warm friend of Bernardo, (*Lettere*, vol. II. p. 237. ; III. 73.) and that to him Torquato writes his most confidential letters.

drought, to second, by a beneficent rain, the holy vows of that devout pontiff.*

CHAP. VII.

A. D. 1572.
Act. 28.

Meanwhile, our poet made applications, especially by means of the Duchess of Urbino, and of Leonora her sister, that he might be received into the service of Alphonso of Este. This was easily effected; a pension was assigned him of about fifteen crowns of gold each month, and this was to commence from January 1572, though he did not arrive in Ferrara till four months afterwards. At the same time he was informed, that he was exempted from any particular obligation, and might attend in peace to his studies.† Delighted with his prospects, he departed from Rome, stayed some days at Pesaro with the Prince of Urbino, and in the beginning of May arrived at Ferrara, where he was graciously received by the duke.‡ The memory of this kindness, and the fortunate shelter afforded him at this period from the storms of fortune, seem to have made an impression upon Tasso, which no change of conduct could ever efface. “He (says he, speaking of the Duke of Ferrara, in a discourse

Is received into
the service of
the Duke of
Ferrara.

* As this ode is almost the only Latin composition of Tasso which remains, and as some of my readers may wish to peruse it, I have given it a place in the Appendix, (No. XII.)

† *Aminta*, Att. II. Sc. 2. “*O Dafne a me quest’ozio*,” &c. In a pension list, lately among the archives in Modena, was the following passage: “Sig. Torquato Tasso con provvisione di lire cinquantotto e soldi dieci Marchesane il mese, principiando il suo servire adi primo Gennaro dell’anno presente 1572.” This document Serassi received from Tiraboschi, who informed him, that the above sum was equivalent to about fifteen scudi of gold. *Vita del Tasso*, p. 163.

‡ *Opere*, vol. X. p. 247.

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A. D. 1572.
Act. 28.

written many years afterwards, on the accidents of his life,) He raised me from the darkness of my humble fortune, to the light and the reputation of his court; he removed me from indigence to abundance; he communicated a value to my productions, by frequently and willingly listening while I read, and by treating their author with every sort of esteem. He honoured me with his table and conversation, nor did he ever deny me a favour which I requested." *

Never, indeed, was attention or kindness recompensed in so noble a manner. Whether the other epic poets thought their productions too elevated to be inscribed with any mortal name, I know not; but Tasso has not only dedicated his work to Alphonso, but has communicated, and will communicate, to every age, the memory of his benefits. Other princes have no doubt lived, who had fully as great a title as the Duke of Ferrara to the attention of posterity; but of the greater number of these even the names are buried in oblivion, and the tomb, which opened to receive them, swallowed, with themselves, the memory of their deeds.

——— *Illacrymaoiles*

Urgentur, ignotique longa

Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.

Torquato, finding himself in an elegant and comfortable situation, continued to polish his *Jerusalem*, and either gradually to carry on, or to fill up the interstices which he had

* *Opere*, vol. VIII. p. 255.

CHAP. VII.

A. D. 1572.
Act. 28.Death of the
Duchess of
Barbara.

left in that poem. He adorned it with episodes, beautiful in the highest degree; connected them with the main action, in a manner not merely rare, but singular; and was never satisfied with improving, sometimes the sweetness, and sometimes the majesty, of his diction. On the death of the Duchess Barbara, (which happened September 18th 1572,) he wrote to Alphonso one of those consolatory epistles, filled with common-places of philosophy, which it was at that time customary for distinguished men to write. He composed also an oration in her praise, and a number of beautiful verses, testifying his sorrow for the loss which had been sustained.*

In this year, too, died Cardinal Ippolito II., uncle to the Duke of Ferrara, a prelate distinguished by his magnificence in building, and his favour to literary men; among whom may be mentioned Muretus, Lambinus, and Paulus Manutius. The villa which he formed at Tivoli, was universally considered as the most beautiful and delicious in Europe; nor can I help conjecturing that its garden might furnish some embellishments to the paradise of Armida.†

* *Opere*, vol. XI. p. 1. VII. p. 27. VI. pp. 228, 296.

† Amongst other decorations at Tivoli was the art of making water produce musical sounds. "Il primo che facesse fare fontane con organi di canne di Stagno," says Tassoni, "che giorno e notte musicalmente sonassero, alternando diversi suoni, fù il Cardinale Hippolito di Ferrara nel suo mirabil giardino di Tivoli." *Pens. Diversi*, p. 400.

See *Gerus. Lib. can.* XVI. p. 12. "*Vezzosi augelli*," &c. In the first volume of the Collection of the Antiquities of Italy, by Graevius, (p. 1217) there is a description of Tivoli, written by Uberto Folieta; but a particular description without drawings is useless, as communicating only a very dim and indefinite idea. Even in Tivoli whim and artifice often supplied the place of nature. "*Aquæ emergentes*, (says Folieta) *varios*

CHAP. VII.

A. D. 1572.
Act. 28.

On the death of this ecclesiastic, our poet wrote a sonnet, addressed to his former patron, Cardinal Lewis, who had now returned from France. * At this time the chair of geometry and of the sphere, in the academy of Ferrara, being vacant, Tasso was by the duke appointed professor, with the obligation of lecturing only upon festivals. This appointment took place in January 1573; and though the salary was small, yet, as the situation was honourable, and the duty not great, it afforded considerable satisfaction to our poet. †

1573.
Act. 29.

It has already been mentioned, that, in 1567, a pastoral fable, written by Arienti, had been represented at Ferrara, and that it is probable, that at that time Tasso had formed the idea of writing a work of this kind. This he had not hitherto found leisure or inclination to accomplish; but as in January this year, Alphonso visited Rome, which left his poet at greater liberty, he began, and, it is said, in less than two months finished his *Aminta*. It is likely, that he had

Tasso finishes
his *Aminta*.

avium cantus imitantur, quos aviculae ex aere effictae ramulis aereis insidentes, emittere videantur per intervalla, modo ad recessum noctuae ex aere quoque effictae canentes, modo, ad accessum, cantum intermittentes," p. 1222.

* *Oper.* vol. VI. p. 198.

† Ferrante Borsetti, *Hist. Almi Ferrarien. Gymnas*, tom. II. p. 198., and Girol. Baruffaldi, *Ad. Ferrar. Gymn. Historiam Supplen.* part II. p. 61. In an old MS. book of accounts, there is, as we learn from Serassi, p. 170., the following entry: "M. Torquato Tasso da ... doctore legente deputato a le lecture de la Sfera, e di Eclide come Sallario de X cento cinquanta & X. 150." Neither Torquato's name nor his lecture is mentioned in this book before from 1573 to 1574; and after that period they continue united till 1579, the period of his imprisonment. In 1580 one Jerome Romagnolo is appointed his successor, with the obligation to read "nel di di festa." It would seem from the entry, that Tasso was only a deputy of the professor.

already, as was his custom, formed the disposition of the work, and planned its incidents ; nor in that case, will the speed with which it was concluded appear improbable. *

CHAP. VII.

A. D. 1573.
Act. 29.

As the *Aminta* is one of those two precious jewels, with which the treasures of poetry have been enriched by Torquato, my reflections on its value will be necessarily so long, that, in order not to interrupt my narration, I must refer to the Appendix. † In his pastoral, our poet, under the name of Tirsi, gives, as we shall there see, an account of himself and his situation ; and it is a wonderful circumstance, that he appears, even at this early period, to have had a presentiment of that mental calamity of which he was afterwards the victim.

Or tu non sai
Ciò che Tirsi ne scrisse ? allor che ardendo
Forsennato, egli errò per le foreste ;
Sì, ch' insieme movea pietate e riso
Nelle vezzose Ninfe, e ne' Pastori ?
Nè già cose scrivea degne di riso,
Sebben cose facea degne di riso.

Aut. I. Sc. 1.

* Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur.

The time and labour bestowed on a production is not always a test even of its relative merit, compared with the other works of the same author. Voltaire tells us, that his *Zaire*, the finest tragedy perhaps in the world, was planned in one, and written in twenty-two days ; whereas, he bestowed much time and labour on *Eryphile*, an unsuccessful piece, written immediately before that admirable composition. “ L'idée de cette pièce (*Zaire*) étant si neuve et si fertile s'arrangea d'elle-même ; et au lieu que le plan d' *Eryphile* m'avoit beaucoup coûté, celui de *Zaire* fut fait en un seul jour, et l'imagination échauffée par l'intérêt qui regnait dans ce plan, acheva la pièce en vingt-deux jours.—VOLTAIRE, *Lettre d M. de la Roque sur la tragedie de Zaire*.

† Appendix, (No. XIII.)

CHAP. VII.

A. D. 1573.

Act. 29.

But know you not
 That which poor Thyrsis wrote ? when mad with love,
 He rang'd the forests, moving tears and smiles
 In every gentle nymph, in every swain :
 Strange youth ! his deeds and writings how unlike !
 Wise were his writings, but his deeds were wild.

In the *Aminta*, some very high compliments are paid to the duke and to his secretary Pigna, and Torquato avenges himself of Sperone, whom, under the name of Mopsus, he describes as of an extremely envious and disagreeable temper. That critic had, by the interest of our poet, been invited to Ferrara, and well received ; nevertheless, when Torquato recited to the duke and his court, some cantos of his *Jerusalem*, Sperone, instead of joining in the applause, criticised it in a most cruel manner, in order to show his subtlety. Nothing could be more savage than this procedure, and the youthful poet was for a considerable time disheartened, and even disgusted with his performance. Genius, like the tender plant, should, while it is rising to strength, be fostered and encouraged ; since the same storms would then be fatal, by which, in its maturity, it would only be invigorated.

The duke returned from Rome in the beginning of March 1573 ; and, hearing that the *Aminta* was completed, gave orders for its representation on the arrival of his brother the cardinal, which happened on the twenty-seventh of the same month. Accordingly, in spring this year, the *Aminta* was performed, with incredible applause to the poet, and delight of the audience. In spite, however, of the perfection of the work, Torquato did not at this time intend to

The *Aminta* is
 acted,

CHAP. VII.

A. D. 1573.
Act. 29.

publish it, and he was extremely grieved when he heard that several manuscript copies were abroad. Probably he repented his severity to Sperone, who, notwithstanding his envy and ingratitude, had been the friend of his father, and useful to himself in his studies. From a manuscript copy of this work, written by our poet himself, when more advanced in life, it appears that he had expunged both the passages against Sperone, and likewise those in praise of the court of Ferrara. The *Aminta*, indeed, seems to have been no great favourite of its author, and he scarcely ever mentions it in his letters. He had afterwards too good reason to have a better opinion of the prescience of Sperone, (whom he blames in the pastoral for advising him not to go to court,) he probably was not much satisfied with the compliments paid to Pigna, and the poem seems to have awakened painful recollections. Several years afterwards, while Torquato was confined in the hospital of St Anne, a copy of the *Aminta*, as it originally stood, having fallen into the hands of the younger Aldus, he gave it to the press under the title of *Amin-ta Favola Boscareccia di M. Torquato Tasso con privilegio. In Vinegia, M.D.LXXXI.* This is the first edition, which has been followed by above eighty others, without reckoning the translations into different languages, with many of which the original is printed.

and published.

Two of the best proofs of the eminence of this work are, first, that Tasso has generally been considered as the inventor of the pastoral fable, though his drama had been preceded by three of the same kind. The other is, that his pas-

CHAP. VII.

A. D. 1579.
Act. 29.

toral was succeeded by a swarm of others, to the amount of eighty, in a few years afterwards. This was prior to 1615, and in 1700 they amounted to above two hundred. The success of Burns raised a vast cloud of Scottish poets; and, in general, no better proof can be given of the excellence of a production of a new species, than the numerous imitations of the servile drove which it brings forth. Of the imitations of the *Aminta*, the *Pastor fido* of Guarini, disputes, in the opinion of many, the palm of superiority with its illustrious prototype.* The others are scarcely spoken of, except the *Filli di Sciro*, of the Count Bonarelli, and the *Alceo* of Antonio Ongaro. This latter work has been called the *Bathed Aminta*, (*Aminta Bagnato*) as it is almost a transcript of the poem of Tasso, only he makes the persons of his drama fishermen, instead of shepherds; transforms the Satyr into a Triton; and makes Alceo (his *Aminta*,) throw himself into the sea, instead of precipitating himself into a valley from a rock.

* Of the *Pastor fido* I shall speak in the Appendix, when treating of the *Aminta*. It was first represented at Turin in 1585, on the occasion of the nuptials of Charles Emanuel, duke of Savoy, with Catherine of Austria; and in 1590, was given to the press. I cannot help thinking, though there is no hint of that kind in any Italian writer, that a considerable share of the obstinacy with which Alphonso persecuted Guarini, was owing to the dedication of that pastoral to Charles Emanuel of Savoy, immediately on the poet's leaving the court of Ferrara.

CHAPTER VIII.

Reflections on the general infelicity of men of genius.—Tasso visits Urbino, to the princess of which he writes complimentary verses.—Returns to Ferrara, and begins a tragedy.—Progress of his great work.—He is seized with a quartan fever.—Concludes his Jerusalem Delivered.—Becomes desirous of leaving the court of Ferrara.—Sends his poem to be revised at Rome.

A. D. 1573 — 1575.

AET. 29 — 31.

By the composition of his *Aminta*, Tasso gained a pre-eminence offensive to a crowd of inferior authors, whom his superiority afflicted ; and prepared that combination of enemies who opposed his career, and molested his tranquillity. This was natural; for, if we analyse the motives of friendship and hatred, we shall find that their sources are almost always self-love gratified and wounded. Our poet, too, lived in a petty court, where each was jealous of the other ; where the success of one was a barrier to the interest of his rival,

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1573.
Aet. 29.

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1573.
Act. 29.

and where the presence of the fortunate candidate was continually awakening in the other the sense of inferiority, so that we need not doubt that his eminence kindled malignity and rage.

General infelicity of men of genius.

It would seem, that nature has balanced every condition, and counterpoised each portion of good, with some counter-vailing evil. The fame of the poet is, of all kinds of literary glory, the most popular and extensive; but it rests upon titles, the legitimacy of which it is in the power of the meanest and most ignorant to contest. That sensibility, too, which seems necessary for a high superiority in any of the fine arts, is commonly the scourge and torment of its possessor; and it has been well remarked by Mr Smellie, that a sentient being, with mental powers much superior to those of man, could not live and be happy in the world. "If such a being really existed, his misery would be extreme. With senses more delicate and refined, with perceptions more acute and penetrating, with a taste so exquisite, that the objects around it would by no means gratify it, obliged to feed on nourishment too gross for his frame, he must be born only to be miserable, and the continuation of his existence would be utterly impossible. Even in our present condition, the sameness and insipidity of objects and pursuits, the futility of pleasure, and the infinite sources of excruciating pain, are supported with great difficulty by refined and cultivated minds. Increase our sensibilities, continue the same objects and situation, and no man could bear to live."

The bliss of man, (could pride that blessing find)
 Is not to act, or think beyond mankind;
 No powers of body, or of soul to share,
 But what his nature, and his state can bear . . .
 Say what the use, were finer optics given,
 T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heaven?
 Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
 To smart, and agonize at every pore?
 Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,
 Die of a rose in aromatic pain?
 If nature thundered in his opening ears,
 And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres;
 How would he wish that heaven had left him still,
 The whispering zephyr, and the purling rill!
 Who finds not Providence all good and wise,
 Alike in what it gives, and what denies.*

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A. D. 1573.

Act. 29.

It has been remarked indeed, that few men of great eminence, especially in any of the fine arts, have enjoyed much uniformity of happiness; and that their life is a checquered tissue of pleasure and of pain. This, as I have said, seems to be principally owing to a greater delicacy of feeling, and as, in general, they never receive a recompence proportion-

Causes of this.

* *Essay on Man*, I. 189. A similar idea is beautifully expressed by Mr Prior in his *Solomon*.

What avails it to be wise,
 To view this cruel scene with quicker eyes;
 To know with more distinction to complain,
 And have superior sense in feeling pain.

C'est une belle Allégorie, (says happily, but fancifully, a French writer,) dans la Bible, que cet arbre de la science du bien et du mal qui produit la mort. Cet emblème ne veut-il pas dire que lorsqu'on a pénétré le fond des choses, la perte des illusions amène la mort de l'âme, c'est à dire un désintéressement complet sur tout ce qui touche et occupe les autres hommes.

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A. D. 1573.
Act. 29.

ed to their exertions, this must increase their natural disposition to melancholy. There are some studies, too, which are naturally afflicting, as those which engage us in the spectacle of society, and of the human heart. Add to this, the destruction of illusion, and the unfortunate capacity of seeing objects in their real nature, unembellished by the fairy colouring with which they had been invested. Happiness, also, seems to consist in a kind of conformity of our situation to our desires ; a kind of equilibrium between our inclinations and the means of satisfying them. But as the desires of human beings are vast in proportion to their genius, the life of a great man must be spent in continual aspirations, in the ceaseless agitation of an ever active, ever insatiable passion. Thus, he will be often the most restless and dissatisfied of mankind ; tormented at once by a fretful impatience, and by a vacancy of heart amidst all the puerile enjoyments of life. *

If we now consider the effects of dependence on the mind, we shall conclude that Tasso was not perhaps in so enviable a condition as an undiscerning observer might have supposed. When a person is obliged to give up his liberty to procure subsistence, when he has to humble his genius to flatter the passions and prejudices of a patron ;

* The ancient physiologists have remarked the general infelicity of men of genius ; but they seem to have mistaken the cause for the effect, and attribute talents to melancholy, not melancholy to talents. " Non sine ratione," says Sydenham, " observaverit Aristoteles melancholicos cæteris ingenio præstare. *Oper. univers.* p. 394. See too, Arist. Prob. 1. Sect. xxx. Galen, lib. 1. C. 39. *de natura humana.*

the mind either loses its energy, and is enfeebled by servile timidity, or it becomes suspicious and irritable, by its continual struggle between that liberty congenial to genius, and that dependence to which it is subjected.

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1573.
Act. 29.

The fame of the *Aminta* had diffused itself so widely, that the Princess of Urbino, who had not had it in her power to be present at its representation, was desirous to hear it recited by the author himself. For this purpose she invited him to Pesaro, at the same time requesting her brother Alphonso to grant his permission; a petition with which he readily complied. Torquato was delighted to visit a court where he had been so well received in his youth, and to see a princess to whose patronage he owed, in a great degree, his present favour at the court of Ferrara. He arrived at Pesaro about the beginning of summer 1573, and was well received by the prince and princess, as well as by the aged Duke Guidubaldo, who had formerly been his own and his father's protector. His pastoral was much commended; his *Jerusalem* admired. Here, too, our poet had an opportunity of forming a friendship with James Mazzoni, who afterwards distinguished himself as a learned apologist of Dante.*

Tasso visits
Pesaro.

* *Oper.* vol. II. p. 302. This gentleman (of whom an elaborate life has been written by Serassi) is mentioned with respect by Milton, in his *Tractate of Education*, when speaking of those writers on the art of poetry, whom the young are to consult: "I mean not here, (says he) the prosody of a verse, which they could not but have hit on before among the rudiments of grammar; but that sublime art, which, in Aristotle's poetics, and the Italian commentaries of Castelvetro, Tasso, Mazzoni, and others, teaches what the

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A. D. 1573.
Act. 29.

In the course of the summer, the Princess Lucretia, to avoid the heats, retired to Castel Durante, a delightful pleasure house of her husband, and carried Torquato along with her. Here he spent some agreeable months, occasionally composing or reciting his poem. His memory, prior to his misfortunes, was extremely tenacious; so that he could retain at once three or four hundred stanzas before writing them down.* At times, too, he found leisure to compose complimentary verses on the princess, which were the more agreeable, because he even commended her beauty; a subject, says Serassi, the treatment of which required much delicacy, as she was now in her thirty-ninth year. Of the sonnets, written by our poet to the Princess of Urbino, the following seems to me the most beautiful; and it certainly required some ingenuity to represent her present beauty as different from, and yet more exalted than, her virgin bloom.

laws are of a true epic poem; what of a dramatic; what of a lyric; what decorum is; which is the grand masterpiece to observe. This would make them soon perceive what despicable creatures our common rhimers and play writers be; and shew them what religious, what glorious, and magnificent use might be made of poetry, both in divine and human things."—*Prose Works*, vol. I. p. 281.

* *Oper.* vol. X. p. 360.

Thou, in thy years unripe, a purple Rose
 Didst seem, which fears the sun's enticing rays;
 Veil'd in her green attire, his ardent gaze
 She shuns; nor will her virgin charms disclose.
 Or Morn, thou seem'd (for nothing earthly shews
 What thou wert then,) the Morn, when she displays
 Her sweetest smiles, when heaven with gold doth blaze,
 And all the pearly field with beauty glows.
 Nor, though thy verdant budding years are fled,
 Art thou less fair, nor do thy ripen'd charms
 Delight us less than did thy timid spring:
 So the expanded rose doth sweeter shed
 Its fragrance round: so when the sun doth fling
 His mid-day beams, he brightest shines, and warms. *

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1579.
Act. 20.

It would seem, from the comparative number of compositions which remain, that the attachment of Tasso to Lucretia, was greater than towards her sister Leonora. This, however, proves nothing, as the situation of this latter princess, and the very delicacy of his love, might prevent that public praise which he could openly bestow on the duchess. Serassi, however, adduces a letter which had remained un-

* Negli anni acerbi tuoi purpurea rosa
 Sembravi tu, che a' rai tepidi, all' ora
 Non apre il sen, ma nel suo verde ancora
 Verginella s'asconde, e vergognosa;
 O piuttosto parei (che mortal cosa
 Non s'assomiglia a te) celeste Aurora,
 Che le campagne imperla, e i monti indora
 Lucida in ciel sereno, e rugiadosa.
 Or la men verde età nulla a te toglie;
 Nè te, benchè negletta, in manto adorno
 Giovinetta beltà vince, o pareggia.
 Così più vago è'l fior, poi che le foglie
 Spiega odorate, e'l Sol nel mezzo giorno
 Via più, che nel mattin, luce e fiammeggia.

Vol. VI. p. 37.

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1573.
Act. 29.

published, and which, from the coolness and indifference of its style, certainly seems to bear testimony that his ardour for Leonora was not at this period very consuming.

*To his most illustrious and most excellent Lady and Patroness,
Madam Leonora of Este.*

I have not written to your excellency during so many months, rather from defect of subject, than of inclination ; and this will appear from the smallness of the cause upon which I now take occasion to do myself that honour. I send your excellency a sonnet, as my usher to your memory, for I think I recollect that I promised to send you all my new compositions. The sonnet has little resemblance to those beautiful ones which I suppose you are in the daily habit of receiving ; and, indeed, it is as poor in wit and art, as I myself am in fortune. In my present state, however, it is impossible for me to do better ; and I send it, as, whether good or bad, it will effect what I desire. Do not think, however, that I have at present such vacancy of thought as to have in my heart any room for love. It expresses not my own feelings, (or perhaps it might not have been so bad) but was composed at the request of a poor lover, who, having for some time past quarrelled with his mistress, can hold out no longer, but is forced to capitulate and demand compassion. Nothing farther remains for me say, except that the stay of Madam, your sister, is rather protracted than otherwise ; so that I believe she will not depart for Ferrara before the eighteenth of this month. I most humbly kiss

your hands. From Castel Durante, the 3d of September 1573.

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1573.
Act. 29.

Of your excellency,
The most humble and most obliged servant,
TORQ. TASSO.*

From the court of Urbino, Torquato returned to Ferrara, probably in company with the Princess Lucretia. He had received from her husband, but especially from herself, many valuable presents; particularly a very precious ruby, which he afterwards sold at Mantua, during his calamities, and which, in the time of his flight, was of great use in procuring him sustenance. The object of Lucretia's journey to Ferrara, was probably to take leave of her brother the cardinal, who was once more on the point of returning to France, at that time in a very calamitous condition. His departure gave great grief to his two sisters, especially to his favourite Leonora, to whom Torquato wrote a consolatory sonnet on the occasion.

The happy success of the *Aminta*, and the applause which its author received, prompted him to undertake a tragedy; being now desirous to attempt every method to escape oblivion, and to gather laurels from every field of poetry. Of this piece the following is the subject: Galealto, king of

Tasso begins a tragedy.

* The sonnet sent in this letter, *Sdegno debil guerrier*, &c. is to be found, vol. VI. p. 17. The sonnets Leonora was in the "habit of receiving" were probably those of Guarini and Pigna.

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1573.
Act. 29.

Norway, had, during his travels, formed a strong friendship with Torindo, king of the Goths, who, like himself, had spent part of his youth in search of adventures. This latter prince had become deeply enamoured, at a tournament, of Alvida, daughter of the King of Sweden ; but the alliance of this prince he had vainly sued for, on account of the strong enmity which had long subsisted between the two nations, and many injuries done and suffered. Torindo prevails on his friend, Galealto, to become likewise a suitor ; to carry the bride to Norway, and then to make her over to himself. This Galealto effects ; but at the same time effected more than entered into the plan of his friend ; for, being driven by a storm into a desert place, and finding a favourable opportunity, he breaks over that system of continence which had been prescribed. What would have been the catastrophe, I know not, for Tasso has resigned his task at the end of the second scene of the second act. The fragment which remains * is exceedingly interesting, and well written ; only there is too great a profusion of description, the speeches are also very long, and at times too pedantic. It is a pity that Tasso did not continue his tragedy at this period, which was one of the happiest of his life. When he again resumed this poem, he was oppressed by sickness and misfortune, so that the *Torrismondo*, as it was afterwards called, is in few respects worthy the reputation of its author.

The year 1574 was now beginning, and Torquato, who had now composed eighteen cantos of his poem, (with the last six of which, however, he was not quite satisfied,) determined, that it should be finished in the course of the year. He, therefore, applied to it with much earnestness, embellishing, with the charms of harmonious verse, thoughts the most dignified, and sentiments the most affecting. It has been observed, by a critic of the present day, that the military actions in this poem are scientifically described; and that the *Jerusalem Delivered* demonstrates, not only a master in the art of poetry, but in the art of war. Every military deed which is painted there, corresponds, according to this critic, with the most rigorous rules of art; and the whole is planned, in a manner, as just as could have been done by a Vauban, or Turenne.*

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1574.
Act. 30.The Jerusalem
Delivered.

On the death of Charles IX., which happened the thirtieth of May this year, the court of Ferrara went into mourning; and as his successor, Henry III., then King of Poland, was to return to the succession by the way of Venice, Alphonso went thither to meet him. This he did, as that prince was the son of his cousin-german, Henry II., and as he was desirous, both to do himself honour, and to repay

* *Discorso sopra la scienza militare di Torquato Tasso per il conte Galeani Torino, 1777.* The same compliment had been paid by Marshall Puysegur and Captain Segrain to Homer and Virgil; but the Count Galeani proves, in his discourse, the superiority of Tasso, in this respect, over the ancient poets. The memoir concerning Virgil is entitled *Memoire sur l'Enéide de Virgile considérée par rapport à l'art de la guerre*, in the collection of the Acad. des Inscrip. et Belles Lettres, tom. XXV.

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1574.
Act, 30.

some of that attention which, in his youth, he had met with in France. For, in early youth, Alphonso had escaped from his father, Hercules II., into France; had been kindly received by Henry II.; made captain of a hundred men at arms; and been present at several sieges and battles. * The train

* It is to be regretted, that the commentators of Tasso have been much more anxious to shew his imitations of Virgil, and the words or lines he adopted from Petrarch and Dante, (a thing which can be done at any time,) than to explain the historical allusions, which sometimes cannot be accomplished, except by the contemporaries of an author. The circumstance of Alphonso's flight into France enables me to throw light on a passage which has been passed over in profound silence, by all the commentators of the *Jerusalem*. One of them, indeed, Paul Beni, mentions the stanza in his voluminous comment on the first twelve books of that poem; but he considers it as some allusion to Achilles, and is, as usual, very pedantic and heavy on the subject.

Alphonso, (as we are told by Muratori, *Ant. Est.* vol. II. p. 380.) when a boy under twenty, went out one day on the pretence of hunting, passed into the Venetian territories, and thence fled into France, accompanied by five gentlemen. His design, he said, was to see the world, and be present at the wars in that country. Henry II., his cousin-german, made him a captain, as mentioned in the text, and he was present at several conflicts with the Spaniards. His flight took place in May 1552, and he returned to Ferrara at the end of September 1554.

We are now, I think, prepared to understand the allusion in the *Jerusalem*. In the first canto, when describing Rinaldo, the fabled ancestor of the house of Este, the poet tells us, that he was born on the banks of the Adige, and was reared by the Princess Matilda; with whom he lived, instructed in every royal art, "till the trumpet, which was heard from the east, fired with the love of glory his youthful mind."

60

All' hor (nè pur tre lustri havea forniti)
Fuggì soletto, e corse strade ignote:
Varcò l' Egeo, passò di Grecia i liti,
Giunse nel campo in region remote;
Nobilissima fuga, e che l'imiti
Ben degna, alcun magnanimo Nipote;
Tre anni son' che è in guerra: e intempestiva
Molle piuma del mento à pena usciva.

which Alphonso now led with him to Venice to meet the new king, is described by a contemporary author ; and I know not whether it was lugubrious or ludicrous. It consisted of five hundred lords and gentlemen, all clothed in black, with long mourning hoods reaching to the middle of their legs. These gentlemen walked through Venice, sometimes two by two, sometimes three by three, and were admired, says my authority, by all the Venetians for their magnificence and gravity.

Henry III. was met by the duke at a considerable distance from Venice ; was greeted in an affectionate manner, and taken into the royal chariot. They were received with much magnificence by the doge and senators, and several days were spent in feasting and sumptuous spectacles.

Hoole drops altogether, in his translation, the two lines, *Nobilissima fuga*, &c. as not having understood them ; Fairfax translates them, " A noble flight, advent'rous, brave, and bold, whereon a valiant prince might justly boast." His stanza, however, may be moulded so as to reflect the meaning of the original, which is literally thus : " A most noble flight, and very worthy that some magnanimous descendant should imitate it."

And then (though scarcely three times five years old)
He fled, alone, by many an unknown coast :
Ægean Seas, and many a Grecian hold,
He pass'd, and reach'd, remote, the Christian Host ;
A noble flight ! which some descendant bold
May imitate, who equal worth can boast ;
Three years the warrior in the camp had seen,
Yet scarce the down began to shade his chin.

It can scarcely, I think, be doubted, that Torquato, in these hitherto mysterious lines, refers to the flight of Alphonso.

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1574.

Act. 30.

Among the most interesting objects, was a triumphal arch, constructed by the celebrated Palladio, and adorned with figures, inscriptions, and trophies, allusive to the achievements of his Christian Majesty. * From Venice Henry came to Ferrara, on the twenty-ninth of July, where, however, on account of his eagerness to be in France, he only remained two days. †

The departure of Torquato to Venice with the duke, was probably for the purpose of arranging matters for the publication of his work. ‡ His stay there, together with the various feasts and spectacles, interrupted its composition, so that, during the whole month of July, he was unable to proceed with his poem, of which he had now reached the last canto. In August, whether from the mental fatigues he had undergone; a little intemperance during the festivals; or, joined to these, the great heats of the season, and the marshy exhalations of Venice, he was seized with a quartan fever. This we learn from a letter, addressed by Torquato to the Pronotary Porzia, at that time legate in Germany, and which, for the first time, has been published by Serassi. ¶

Tasso seized
with a quartan
fever.

* Temanza, *Vita del Palladio*, Venezia, 1762, in 4°. p. 59.

† I have elsewhere (App. No. VII.) mentioned, that Alphonso was desirous of succeeding Henry as king of Poland, and that the celebrated Guarini was (by the intrigues of one of his enemies) fixed on as ambassador, or orator, to the Poles. Among the epistles of that poet, there is one addressed to his wife, in which he gives a most pathetic account of the sufferings and dangers he underwent in his journey to Warsaw. The ambition of being his successor was, no doubt, one of the motives of the great attention which Alphonso paid to Henry, whom he had afterwards reason to detest as the murderer of his two nephews, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine.

‡ *Oper.* vol. X. p. 101.

¶ *Vita del Tasso*, p. 138.

“ Most reverend and most illustrious

Signor and patron,

“ I have seen what your reverence has written of me, and of my poem, to Sig. Benedetto Lamberti ; and it has given me infinite consolation. This arises, not merely from perceiving that the fame of my poem is divulged by a commender, himself so illustrious, (for in this respect my pleasure is mixed with fear, lest expectation may prove my most bitter enemy,) as because I have learned, both by your sentiments and by your good offices in extending my reputation, that your love towards me has neither need of being supported by letters, nor warmed by presence ; but is most firm and fervent in distance and in silence. And although I had sufficient proof of this by what passed between my lord the duke and your reverence, yet this new testimony has been dear and sweet to me. Such, indeed, is my pride and satisfaction at being beloved by you, that I swear I prefer it to all the applause of the world ; to all the glory which my poem can confer upon me ; and I think that, to all the wise of present or future ages, I shall appear sufficiently illustrious, if I shall be known to them as the friend of your reverence. With regard to my poem, I had begun, this August, the last canto, when, being assailed by an unexpected quartan, and by an infinite degree of languor, I laid aside my pen ; nor have I resumed it, nor can resume it, till I shall be either wholly cured, or at least considerably convalescent.

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1574.
Act. 30.

To my *Discourses* I have added nothing;* though I have studied and planned much to enrich and strengthen them, and have invented many new arguments, and observed many places and examples of the ancients on this subject. And were not the great distance of your lordship attended with such reputation to yourself, and advantage to Christianity; were it not of such great consequence, as to destroy, in a well-regulated mind, all private considerations, I could have wished that you had been near to give your judgment, both of them, and of my poem, which now advances towards the press, and of whose happy success I should have more confidence after your criticisms. Nothing else occurs to me to say, except that, praying for your felicity, I kiss your hands. And am,

Of your most reverend, &c.

The 13th of November, 1584, Ferrara,

The most affectionate servant,

TORQUATO TASSO."

The following postscript is added, by the hand of Torquato himself: "Such is the condescending familiarity of your lordship, that I know you will readily pardon the very great liberty I have taken of employing the pen of another. My languor, indeed, is so great, that writing is painful.

* He means the discourses on heroic poetry which he had composed at Padua. It was at this university that Tasso had become acquainted with Porzia, at that time a student there. See *Oper.* vol. VII, p. 131.

Again I kiss your hands, and thank you infinitely for the redoubled favours you every day confer on me."

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1575
Act. 31.

The languor, which was the consequence of this disease, continued all the winter following, so that it was only in the spring, that our bard had the satisfaction of seeing the termination of his poem. Of this circumstance, we are informed by a letter, addressed to Cardinal Albano, who, both as his father's friend and his own, and as a native of Bergamo, was interested in his glory. The letter is dated on the sixth of April, 1575. "I am about (says Tasso) to pay a small homage of my dependence, by giving to your eminence an account of my condition and studies. I have to inform you then, that, after a most distressing quartan, I am now, by the blessing of God, in good health; and, after long vigils, have at last conducted to a close the poem of *Godfrey*. The freedom which I at present feel from disease, and that which I soon hope to enjoy from poetical occupations, is in no respect more dear to me, than that I may employ it in fulfilling any task which your eminence may deign to impose on me. If, as I hope, I shall be able, by the criticism of some judicious and intelligent friends, to send my poem to the press by September next, I intend to pay a visit of some months to Rome. This I have not hitherto considered myself as at liberty to do, not having in my own mind satisfied my obligations to the most serene duke, my patron, obligations which, however, will, I hope, be in some degree lightened by the dedication of my poem. And certainly, my lord, though there be many things which attract me to

Finishes his
Jerusalem.

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.

Rome, nothing does this in a greater degree than my desire to pay you my respects, and to receive your counsels on the direction of my life. Meanwhile, I trust, that if in any respect I shall have need of your favour, (which, should it happen, will be signified by Sig. Scipio Gonzaga,) I trust you will act towards me with your wonted beneficence.” *

Is dissatisfied
with Ferrara.

Torquato was now become extremely dissatisfied with his situation, not so much on the duke's account, who still treated him with benignity, as, because plots were formed against him by some persons of the court, who, envying his poetical glory, tried to calumniate him in a clandestine manner, and to darken, by evil arts, that fame with which he was about to be glorified by his poem. † Tired with the necessity of acting always on the defensive, and thinking, on the other hand, that his rewards and honours were not of such a kind as to merit a continual struggle, he had resolved, as soon as his *Godfrey* should be published, to leave the court of Ferrara, and to reside in Rome. There he hoped to study in quiet, either at liberty, if he could support himself with what he already possessed, and the gain which he might expect to make by his poem, or if that (as was probable,) could not be effected, in the service of some cardinal prince, where he would be less exposed to envy and malignity. This design he confided to Scipio Gonzaga, praying for his direction

* *Oper.* vol. X. p. 249.† *Ibid.* p. 96.

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Act, 31.

and assistance in this matter. * To this circumstance, as well as to the procuring a privilege for his poem, the words at the conclusion of the letter to Cardinal Albano seem to refer, when he says that he hoped that he would listen to his applications with his wonted liberality. Scipio exerted himself in behalf of his friend with much eagerness; and made, as we shall afterwards see, applications to the Cardinal de Medici, and to other great lords.

Before executing this resolution, however, Torquato was determined to discharge his obligations to the house of Este, by publishing, under the auspices of the duke, his so much expected poem. Such, however, was his modesty, and his docility, that he formed the imprudent resolution of submitting it to the criticisms of different literary friends. Besides the confusion in which he was involved by the difference, and often contrariety of their opinions, so much delay was occasioned, that, owing to the misfortunes which soon crowd-

Sends his poem
to be revised at
Rome.

† *Oper.* vol. X. p. 96. This valuable letter is unfortunately mutilated, as is the case with several of those which would have thrown light on the history of Tasso. His wealth, after the publication of the *Jerusalem*, he expected would amount to four hundred scudi. This appears from the following passage, in which, after hinting his vexations at Ferrara, he says,—“ Verrò dunque a Roma alcun mese dopo la edizione: e fra i doni, ch'io ebbi da Urbino e'l guadagno, che farò del libro, spero ch'io metterò insieme quattrocento scudi. Questi non mancheranno: se il Signor Duca, o altro Estense mi donerà alcuna cosa, *lucre apponam*; ancorchè d'uno, cioè del Marchese da Este, sia certo, che farà qualche dimostrazione. Ma che sono quattrocento scudi, a voler godere i frutti, e non consumare il capitale? Pur se bisognerà anco consumare del capitale son risoluto a farlo. In Roma vo' vivere in ogni modo, o con buona, o con mediocre, o con cattiva condizione se sarà piu potente la malignità della mia fortuna, che'l favor di V. S. o d'altri miei Signori.” The above letter is dated Padua, 31st of March, 1575.

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A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.

The revisors of
the Jerusalem.

ed around him, the opportunity was taken from him of publishing his own poem. The friend whom Torquato principally consulted was Scipio Gonzaga, who associated to his critical labours some of the most distinguished literati at that time in Rome. Of these, the principal, during the first revision, were Peter Angelio da Barga, and Flaminio de Nobili. Barga had, in his youth, resided some time at Constantinople, had been professor of rhetoric and of moral philosophy at Pisa; and, besides a profound skill in the ancient languages, was, (as appears chiefly from his poem on hunting, entitled *Cynegeticon*,) an excellent Latin poet. He had begun, in 1560, a Latin poem, with the title of *Syrias*, on the subject of the conquest of Jerusalem, two books of which were published at Paris in 1582, dedicated to Henry III., six others at Rome in 1585, and the whole twelve at Florence, 1591. This work, (of which I have seen only the first six books,) appears to be written purely; but it is a mere metrical gazette, without any of those interesting adventures, those flowery descriptions, those magical embellishments in the poem of Tasso. Barga commences his poem, as the critics say, *ab ovo*, and at the end of the sixth book, Godfrey is only beginning his march from the Propontis. It is wonderful that the perusal of the *Jerusalem* did not discourage the author with his *Syrias*; but bountiful nature has given to many of her children a satisfaction with themselves and their productions, which richly compensates the want of the most transcendent genius. Barga, too, was rewarded for his poems with two thousand florins of gold, and many honours, while

the destined recompence of Tasso was scurrility and an hospital. *

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.

Flaminio de' Nobili, the second of the critics of our poet, besides being a divine and a philosopher, was profoundly skilled in Greek, a circumstance which appears by his translations from St Chrysostom, and his notes to the works of that father, printed at Venice in 1583. He had a principal share also in the Latin translation of the Septuagint, published in

* In the preface to his *Syrias*, Angelio da Barga thus justifies his poem with an implied reproach of the *Jerusalem* of Tasso. After mentioning, that it had not been his design to imitate Homer and Virgil, he adds, "neque vulgare et fabulosum aliquod bellum, sed christianum, et communi christianorum omnium consensu pietatis et religionis causa susceptum, et bellorum omnium, quæ gesta unquam sunt, maximum; in quo neque delectandi, neque docendi gratia fabulas adhibere, et monstrosas quibusdam narrationibus uti oporteret; sed christiani ritus christianè et latinè adumbrandi et exponendi, et ne verbum quidem interserendum, quod impium illum Deorum cultum et superstitionem redoleret." He adds, that his scope had been "ut si fieri posset, poema aliquod heroicum extaret, in quo nihil non christianum esset, et quod a fabulis ad pietatem adolescentulorum animos traduceret."

As some of our bailiffs of Parnassus may (after having done with Milton,) turn their attention to the thefts of Tasso, it is proper to mention, that this bard professes, in his *Apology*, that, when he began his poem, he knew of nobody who had treated that subject in verse. It was not till a considerable time afterwards, that he heard that Angelio da Barga was writing on it. The conquest of Jerusalem was, as I formerly observed, very likely, in that age, to present itself to the fancy of a poet. From tom. IX. p. 149, of the *Storia della letteratura Italiana*, it appears that Muzio had planned a poem on the subject, from prosecuting which, he was deterred by hearing of the undertaking of Tasso. "Che il Tasso giovane," (says he in a letter to Bolognetti, who had informed him of this circumstance,) "abbia tolta quella impresa, Io non ne sapeva nulla. Egli ha buono spirito, e buono stilo. Se le altri parti risponderanno, ha preso soggetto da farsi onore."

For an account of Peter Angelio da Barga, the reader may consult Tiraboschi, *Storia della Lett. Ital.* tom. VII. Part. III. p. 266. Mazzuch. *Scritt. Ital.* tom. I. part. II. p. 747. and *Fatti. consol. dell' Acad. Fior.* p. 287.

CHAP. VIII. 1588 at Rome, and is the author of a treatise on Predestination, and of several moral and ascetic works. *

A. D. 1575.
Aet. 31.

These learned men, together with Scipio Gonzaga, and the others whom he occasionally associated, had frequent public meetings, and each in private examined the poem, and put into writing the remarks which occurred to him. Of the general plan of the work, all the critics readily approved; but with regard to particular members, their opinions were discordant, and even contradictory. In the poetical letters of Tasso, there is a memorial kept of this revision, an epistolary correspondence, which seems to me invaluable to the student of poetry. † These gentlemen, however, were not the only persons whose judgment was consulted, a circumstance which only added to the perplexity of the poet. ‡ I shall conclude the present chapter with a letter of Tasso (of an uncertain date, but written probably some years after this period) to the Abbot Niccolò degli Oddi, a most respectable man, who was one of his greatest friends and admirers. It proves strongly what absurd criti-

* Serassi *Vita del Tasso*, p. 224. Tiraboschi *Storia*, &c. tom. VII. p. 1. p. 322.

† *Opere*, vol. X. p. 77. *et seq.*

‡ The review of the *Jerusalem Delivered* began at Rome towards the end of February 1575, and soon afterwards Tasso went to Padua, where he resided during the whole month of March, apparently with the design of consulting the critics in that city. He lodged in the house of John Vincenzo Pinelli, whose extensive library has given celebrity to his name, and was treated with great attention and respect. In a letter to Scipio Gonzaga, (vol. X. p. 252) he tells him he was invited to many banquets, and was become a general object of curiosity. In the academies he had an opportunity of meeting literary men, and, amongst others, formed an acquaintance with Paul Beni, who was afterwards his champion and commentator.

cisms a person may expect when he begins to show deference to the taste of his friends, and also how strongly the human mind was at this time fettered by the authority of Aristotle. Nothing, by the way, can better testify the greatness of the genius of that astonishing man, than the tyranny which he at once exerted over the world of literature, and that of science ; and that the same versatile mind had been alternately occupied with the abstractions of logic, and with the visions of poetry.

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.Despotic au-
thority of Aris-
totle.

To the Father Abbot D. Niccolò degli Oddi.

To the first part of your letter, I shall satisfy by my presence, to the other with my pen, provided that your reverence can be contented with a short explanation ; for to answer long questions I am not qualified, and the acuteness of your genius is such, that I cannot too much abridge my style. I may, therefore, briefly give to your two doubts this answer, common to both, that you object to my poem as if it were a philosophical work, since you require in it the truth and exactness of a scientific performance, and not merely the fame and opinion which is sufficient for poetry*** Your first objection is, “ it does not seem proper that Urania should be invoked in the poem, under the name of Muse, and placed in heaven ; since the name of Muse signifies only sound, or song, which, in Aristotle’s opinion, cannot be in heaven ; and since there is no sound, there cannot al-

CHAP. VIII.

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so be Muses in heaven." To this, it might be sufficient to reply, that, according to the opinion of Pythagoras, of Plato, of Marcus Tully, of Dante, and of other poets, philosophers, and theologists, sacred and profane, there is sound in heaven; by which opinion, I might support myself either as a poet, a philosopher, or divine. But confining myself to the doctrines of the Peripatetics, I deny the consequence, *there is no sound, and therefore no muses in Heaven.* The argument would be better thus, *there is no music, and therefore no Muses in Heaven.* But if there are musical proportions, it follows that there are Muses in heaven. Now that the former of these exist there, is most certain; since the whole world is composed with musical harmony, as Plato demonstrates in his *Timæus*, and Plotinus, and others who have philosophised on this subject. Nor would Aristotle himself have denied that in heaven there are intelligible proportions, which was the meaning of Pythagoras, as Simplicius, a Peripatetic philosopher, declares in his I. concerning heaven, when he treats of this question. Your second objection is the following: "It does not please me that it should be feigned, that a dream was sent by God to Godfrey, this being directly contrary to Aristotle, who, says in his chapter, *De divinatione per Somnium*, that dreams are not sent by God, *Somnia non mittuntur a Deo.*" To this I answer, that the authority of Homer, the prince of poets, is sufficient for the defence of a poet. Now, in the *Iliad*, we read that a dream was sent by Jupiter to Agamemnon, the captain of the Grecian army. But since the authority of Aristotle is desired,

that philosopher makes mention of some divine, or demoniacal dreams, sent by the divinity or demons ; as St Thomas has particularly explained in his little work, *De Intellectu****; and let this at present suffice for a short satisfaction of your doubts." *

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What *satisfaction* Niccolò degli Oddi received from the answer to his first objection, I am not qualified to judge, as I am not certain that I clearly comprehend the solution. It may be thought that Tasso was following the advice of Solomon, to answer folly by itself ; I am afraid, however, he was perfectly serious. This letter is a specimen of that subtle refinement, and of those pedantic quotations, which our poet afterwards adopted in the greater part of his dialogues. The discourses on poetry written in his youth are beyond all praise ; but after his misfortunes, he seems to have distrusted the powers of his own mind, and heaps up authorities from writers often of a bad kind, as the schoolmen and later Platonists. The generality indeed of the learned men, in the age of Tasso, were extremely pedantic, and are continually quoting the ancient poets and philosophers. At the dawn, and long after the dawn of learning, the writers of antiquity were considered not only as the model, but as the limit of the beautiful ; the mind, dazzled with their productions, sunk under their influence, so that an author durst scarcely assert that death is certain, without for-

Pedantry of the
learned men in
Tasso's age.

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 93.

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tifying his sentiment with the authority of Euripides or Seneca. Besides, as the only path to the temple of knowledge lay, at that period, through the gates of erudition, every one was eager to show that he was qualified for admission ; that he had a title to the enjoyment of the society of the heroes, of the poets, and philosophers of former ages.

CHAP. IX.

Remarks on consulting friends on a Composition when in Manuscript—Two great defects of the Revisors of the Jerusalem Delivered—Various objections to this Poem—Anguish of its Author from this source—His suspicions of treachery—He falls sick—Proposes to visit Rome—Intense employment of his mind on the Jerusalem.

A. D. 1575—1576.

Act. 31—32.

It seems now to be very generally agreed, and we have the authority and experience of Tasso in support of this opinion, that (except perhaps where a man is to speak of himself,) nothing is more useless than consulting literary friends on the value of a manuscript performance. * “ I was

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* M'è rincresciuto che col mostrar le mie cose, si sia dato occasione di cianciare a i pedanti, *Oper.* vol. X. p. 131. “ The vexation, (says Cowper,) the perplexity, that attends a multiplicity of criticisms by various hands, many of which are sure to be futile,

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consulting
friends on a
MS.

soon tired, (says Gibbon, when speaking of his history, in the memoirs of his life,) I was soon tired with the modest practice of reading the manuscript to my friends. Of such friends, some will praise from politeness, and some will criticise from vanity. The author himself is the best judge of his own performance; no one has so deeply meditated on the subject, no one is so sincerely interested in the event." When a composition, indeed, reaches a certain degree of merit, nothing is so indeterminate as individual blame or approbation; and the late S. Johnson, (a man of infinite literary experience,) was accustomed to confess, that he was unable to decide *a priori* on the success of a work. No writer can be mentioned who meets with universal approba-

many of them ill-founded, and some of them contradictory to others, is inconceivable, except by the author whose ill-fated work happens to be the subject of them. This also appears to me self-evident, that, if a work have past under the review of one man of taste and learning, and have had the good fortune to please him, his approbation gives security for that of all others qualified like himself. I speak thus, my dear, after having just escaped from such a storm of trouble, occasioned by endless remarks, hints, suggestions, and objections, as drove me almost to despair, and to the very verge of a resolution to drop my undertaking for ever."—*Life*, vol. II. p. 358. 8°.

In fact, whoever sits down to examine a book *critically*, unless a production of pure intellect, renders himself in some degree incapable of judging it; since he analyses coldly what he ought to feel. In every production of taste, sentiment is preferable, as a judge, to discussion; at least it ought to precede, and the other ought to follow. Criticism is almost a mere exercise of judgment; it suspends for a while the impression made on the feelings and imagination, and overpowers the emotions which correspond with beauty and sublimity. Hence it gives rise to fastidiousness, blinds to all other views but those of design and correctness, and (though the destruction of a work is not its faults, but its frigidity,) renders it impossible to be pleased with productions, however admirable, in which there is a mixture of imperfection and irregularity.—See some highly excellent reflections on this subject, *Life of Lord Kames*, vol. I. book II. c. 4.

tion, and who might not have been conscientiously advised to destroy his performance by critics, unperturbed by the wish to please by flattery, or to give pain by asperity.

It has sometimes, indeed, been said, that an author, (by which I at present mean an author of genius,) is a very bad judge of the relative value of his own writings; but I am apt to think, that this, with a very few exceptions, is hardly ever the case. It may happen, indeed, that he speaks more warmly of one of his indifferent, than of his perfect performances; as a mother may be more loud in extolling the charms of a daughter, who is neglected by the world, than of one whose perfections are so great as to procure universal admiration. She does this, not because she thinks the least interesting really superior to the other, but the one is independent, the other needs her eulogies. As a Richelieu received more pleasure by being flattered as a poet, than as a politician; so a Milton may be more satisfied with the applause of his *Paradise Regained*, than of his *Paradise Lost*. In the one case praise is a tribute, in the other it is a gift; but, so far from considering the preference of an indifferent to an excellent performance as an evidence of want of discernment in its author, it is a proof rather of a suspicion that the difference of their value is immense.

At the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, I have mentioned that the letters of Tasso, relative to the opinions of the revisors of his *Jerusalem*, have been preserved; and they are of very high value to the student of poetry. From these, amongst other things, it will evidently appear what

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minute care, and incessant labour, must be undergone by him who aspires to erect a monument for posterity. Nothing is more difficult than to escape oblivion; and Tasso, like Milton, was of opinion, that to leave to “aftertimes a work which they would not willingly let die, it is necessary to join labour and intense study, to the strong propensity of nature.” * No ancient geometer seems to have been more anxious than he was to connect his propositions, no historian to render his narrative more consistent with the truth. Nor was he studious only of the connection of episodes, and the probability of narration; but the dignity of words, the harmony of sounds, the justness of sentiments, every thing, in short, which can embellish a work, or render it valuable, alternately occupied the attention of the poet.

* *P. Works*, vol. I. p. 120. Milton always represents labour as a necessary associate with genius in his combats with Time. Thus, when speaking of his own design of writing an epic poem, he says, “the accomplishment lies not but in a power above man’s to promise; but that none hath, by more *studious ways*, endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit, that none shall—that I dare almost aver of myself, as far as life and free leisure will extend,” * * * as “being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained by the invocation of dame Memory, and her Siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases; to this must be added *industrious* and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs.”—*P. Works*, vol. I. p. 123.

“Giudichi (says Tasso) che il divino Ariosto, e per felicità di natura, e per *l’accurata sua diligenza*, e per la varia cognizione di cose, e per la lunga pratica degli eccellenti scrittori, dalla quale acquistò un esatto gusto del buono, e del bello, arrivasse a quel segno di poetare eroicamente a cui nessun moderno, e pochi fra gli antichi son pervenuti.”—*Oper.* vol. V. p. 503.

“Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem.”

Such was the toil to found imperial Rome.

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There were two great defects of the critics fixed upon by Tasso as the revisors of his *Jerusalem*; the one of which was common to them with their age in general, the other arose from their peculiar condition in life. Of these, the first was the habit of judging, not according to the feelings of nature, but the rules of Aristotle. These poetical rules are, however, valuable; they were deduced from examples very perfect in their kind; and the principal defect of those who continually appealed to them, was the precision of their application. They limited every kind of excellence to the models which had been furnished by the Grecian artists; and as, like all the writings of its great author, the *Poetics* is mutilated and obscure; many rules were established by the commentators, of which the meaning in the original is extremely dubious. “I cannot,” says the illustrious Metastasio, (in his inestimable *Abstract of the Poetics*,) “I cannot sufficiently regret, that our venerable master has had so much confidence in our perspicacity in several passages of this treatise. Hence it happens that his instructions, ill understood, confound instead of enlightening. Thus they serve as arms for people of mean talents to insult the greatest genius, and to condemn and despise, in an authoritative manner, what in the highest degree merits admiration and respect.”* In fact,

* *Estratto della Poetica D'Aristotile*, cap. XXII. “For my part,” says Gray, (*Letter*, Dec. 11, 1746,) “I read Aristotle, his *Poetics*, *Politics*, and *Morals*, though I do not well

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nothing is more common in the fine arts, than to behold mediocrity dictating rules to genius ; and when one beholds such people as Bossu and Dacier giving laws to future Homers and Virgils, one is put in mind of the pedant who lectured before Hannibal upon the art of war. Tasso was perplexed in a peculiar degree by some metaphysical arguments of Sperone, relative to the unity of action. This critic pretended, that the introduction of two heroes, as Godfrey and Rinaldo, both of them necessary to the accomplishment of one effect, was improper in an epic poem ; and that there ought to be a single hero only, as in the Odyssey. Against this and similar objections, our poet argued with

know which is which. In the first place, he is the hardest author by far ever I meddled with. Then he has a dry conciseness, that makes one imagine one is perusing a table of contents, rather than a book ; it tastes, for all the world, like chopped hay, or rather like chopped logic ; for he has a violent affection to that art, being in some sort his own invention, so that he often loses himself in little trifling distinctions and verbal niceties ; and what is worse, leaves you to extricate him as well as you can. Thirdly, He has suffered vastly from the transcribblers, as all authors of great brevity necessarily must. Fourthly and lastly, He has abundance of fine uncommon things, which make him well worth the pains he gives one."

Strabo, lib. 13., recounts the alterations which the works of Aristotle have suffered ; and the reader will also be informed of this in Bayle's Dictionary, article *Tyrannion*. The dryness and obscurity of the *Poetics*, induced Castelvetro to consider that treatise as only a plan or summary of a larger work. As these faults, however, occur in nearly all the works attributed to Aristotle, it must naturally lead us to doubt whether, in fact, we have almost any of the genuine writings of that philosopher. Can that writer, whose " dry conciseness makes one imagine one is perusing a table of contents, rather than a book, and which tastes, for all the world, like chopped hay," be him of whom Cicero asserts, that he pours forth a golden stream of eloquence. " Veniet flumen orationis aureum fundens Aristoteles," (*Acad. Quæst. Lucullus*) or him, the sweetness of whose style, " Eloquendi suavitate," (l. 10. c. I.) is admired by Quintilian ?

much keenness and vexation ; * and it is a singular circumstance, (but has been demonstrated by Terrasson,) that though the critical rules of Aristotle and Bossu, relative to the constitution of an epic poem, are derived from the *Iliad* of Homer ; yet the *Jerusalem* of Tasso is more conformable to these rules than the original work from which they were derived. †

A still deeper perplexity than what arose from metaphysical objections, (deduced from the real or supposed rules of Aristotle,) was occasioned to our poet by the profession of his revisors. The whole or greater number of them were expectants in the church ; the Pontiff Gregory XIII. was uncommonly strict ; and, accordingly, (if we may credit the account of Tasso,) those of the poorer class found it necessary, not merely to be pious and virtuous, (which is the obligation of every Christian,) but to assume an unusual appearance of mortification and sanctity. To these, therefore, the enchantments seemed improper, and the delightful episodes relative to Armida, too flowery and alluring. Flaminio, but especially Antoniano, (a critic of whom more particular mention will, by and bye, be made,) urged that Tasso should remove from his work, not only the enchantments, but all the love scenes whatever ; as it appeared to

* *Oper.* vol. X. pp. 83, 87. His vexation was greatly increased by the publication of Piccolomini's *Commentary on the Poetics*, (October 1575 ;) in which that writer adopted the opinion of Sperone, as did the greater part of Tasso's other critics.—*Ibid.*

† See Appendix, (No. XIV.)

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them thatt hey profaned the sanctity, and diminished the grandeur of the holy enterprise which was the subject of the poem. This would have made short work of the *Jerusalem Delivered*; as it is precisely these very passages which rouse the attention, which soothe the fancy, and which melt the heart of the reader.

The episode of Sophronia and Olindo, against which critics still traditionally declaim, was condemned by all the revisors, except by Sperone, who probably approved of it on this very account. They objected, first, that it was too pretty; next, that it was too soon introduced; and, lastly, that it had a mechanical solution, *che la soluzione fosse per macchina*. This last charge, I confess, with Tasso himself, I do not comprehend;* but the principal objection, and that which is still insisted on, was its want of connection with the main subject. This Torquato himself sometimes doubted; and though much more connected than many episodes in Virgil and Homer, he still wished that its junction with his poem were more intimate. On this subject he was extremely anxious, as, on the one hand, he had very strict ideas of the exact and perfect unity and constitution of a fable; and, on the other, he did not wish to lose an episode which, besides its extreme beauty, seems, from an expression in one of his epistles, to have been a favourite of Al-

* Io confesso di non intendere questo termine *macchina*, o *soluzione per macchina*, vol. X. p. 119.

phonso. "It is true," says he, (in a letter to Gonzaga, of the fifteenth of April, 1575, in which he gives an account of some changes he means to make, in conformity to the opinion of his revisors,) "it is true, that, with regard to the episode of Olindo and Sophronia, I will *indulgere Genio et Principi*, since there is no other place into which I can transpose it." * The same resolution of retaining this episode appears from an unpublished letter of the third of May, addressed to Luca Scalabrino. "I am forming a resolution to leave the episode of Sophronia, changing some things in such a manner that it may please the cavillers, and yet may not be less agreeable." Serassi proposes a theory, that what rendered this episode so dear to Torquato and Alphonso, was, that in Sophronia a natural painting has been given of Leonora of Este; and he wonders that none of the commentators of the *Jerusalem* has taken notice of a circumstance, which, (though certainly not improbable,) originated, perhaps, in all respects with himself. †

I confess, that I am one of those who admire the episode in question, and who, (even when I had no intention of writing the life of Tasso,) never could perceive that want of connection with the main subject, which is so much complained of. On this point, I perfectly agree with an opinion, expressed (in his *Abstract of the Poetics of Aristotle*,) by that admirable poet and critic, the Abbé Metastasio. This

* *Oper.* vol. X. p. 98.† *Vita del Tasso*, p. 197.

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writer, after arguing in a manner, and by arguments precisely similar with Tasso, on the absurdity of those who affirm that every episode is faulty, which can either be added or taken away, without the destruction of the principal fable, has the following remarks: "In that case, the story of Nisus and Euryalus would be a defect in the divine *Eneid*, besides that of Camilla and of Dido herself; to say nothing of the obsequies of Anchises in Sicily. The Armida and Erminia, in the immortal *Godfrey*, would be liable to the same charge; and also the ingenious and tender episode of Olindo and Sophronia, which, as if it were an useless member, has been so much and so unjustly condemned. In addition to the supreme delight afforded by that digression, it serves opportunely to place before the eyes of the reader, the turbulent internal state of besieged Jerusalem. It paints the tyrannical and wicked disposition of Aladin; the mournful condition of the wretched Christians, who were enclosed within the walls; and the magnanimous, humane, and heroic character of Clorinda; a personage destined by the poet to have so considerable a share in the subsequent action. Opinions like these I shall never have the rashness to adopt." *

In general, the revisors agreed that the poem was too much ornamented, and they counselled the author to remove some of the embellishments, which seemed more suit-

* *Estratto, &c. Opere*, vol. XVI. Ediz. Zatta Venice, 1783.

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able to the sweetness of lyric, than to the gravity of epic poetry. This Tasso contested, chiefly on the principle that the Italian language does not admit of those poetical compositions, transpositions, and translations, which Demetrius and other writers represent as means of attaining magnificence of diction ; and by which writers, in the Greek and Latin languages, elevated their style. Since, then, the Tuscan poet is deprived of those modes of decoration, which were afforded to the ancients by the very genius of their languages, Tasso argued, that it seemed necessary to ornament more richly, in order to avoid that appearance of poverty, and even of baseness, into which the best Italian poets, (as Petrarch, in his *Trionfi*,) Ariosto, and Dante, have occasionally fallen. One peculiarity in his style, which had not been taken notice of by his critics, Torquato himself remarks, in a letter to Scipio Gonzaga. * “I know not,” says he, “whether your lordship has observed an imperfection in my style, which is the following. I make too frequent use of a disjointed way of speaking, that is, the connection is frequently formed, rather by the union and dependence of sentiments, than by the copula, or other conjunction of words. That this is an imperfection there is no doubt, and yet though such, it has a semblance of excellence, and contributes to grandeur ; but the error consists in its frequency. This defect I have learned from the continual perusal of the *Eneid*, where it exists more abundantly than in any other poem ;

Peculiarity of
Tasso's style.* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 122.

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and hence, it was denominated by Caligula, sand without lime. Yet, though under such an authority I might shield and defend myself, it would perhaps be better sometimes to apply a remedy." This quality of style is very obvious to whoever has perused with attention the two rival Italian bards ; and it has furnished the illustrious Galileo with one of the arguments, by which, in a discourse written when very young on the comparative merits of Tasso and Ariosto, he has asserted the high superiority of the latter over the former of these poets. *

Such were some of the principal objections made (during its first revision,) to the *Jerusalem Delivered* ; for I need not

* See Appendix, (No. XV.) The condensation of the style of Virgil is thus spoken of by Dryden, in his *Preface* to his translation of the *Eneid*: " I look on Virgil as a succinct, grave, and majestic writer ; one who weighed not only every thought, but every word and syllable ; who was still aiming to crowd his sense into as narrow a compass as possibly he could." He adds, that Virgil, as one mean of attaining this purpose, " frequently makes use of synalæphas, or cutting off one vowel when it comes before another in the following word."

Milton, too, like Virgil and Tasso, abounds with elisions, in order to give strength and dignity to his diction. " The unacquaintedness of modern ears (says Cowper,) with the divine harmony of Milton's numbers, and the principles upon which he constructed them, is the cause of the quarrel that they have with elisions in blank verse. But where is the remedy ? In vain should you and I, and a few hundreds more perhaps, who have studied his versification, tell them of the superior majesty of it, and that, for that majesty, it is greatly indebted to those elisions. In their ears, they are discord and dissonance ; they lengthen the line beyond its due limits, and are therefore not to be endured."—*Life*, vol. III. p. 31. 8vo.

I know not whether the following remark of D'Alembert, on the advantages of a compressed style, though exceedingly ingenious, be not too metaphysical. " Le style serré, quand il n'est d'ailleurs ni decousu ni obscur, a le premier de tous les merites, celui de rendre le discours semblable à la marche de l'esprit, et à cette operation rapide, par laquelle des intelligences se communiqueroient leurs idées."

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1576.
Act, 31.Perplexities of
Tasso.

mention a number of verbal and other criticisms ; several of which, as Tasso remarks, smelled of the German college. I say of the first revision, for of the poem there were two examinations at Rome. The earliest commencing in February 1575, ended in the October following ; the latter began immediately after, and was continued till the autumn of 1576. During the former of these periods, the critics were much more mild and forbearing ; whether they had not yet gained sufficient courage ; whether (as seems probable from the letters,) Antoniano and Sperone, the keenest bigot and metaphysician, had not yet been admitted into their number. The advantages which the poem derived from the first revision, appear to have been considerable ; but these bore no proportion to the effect produced on the sensibility of the poet, whom it tossed in a tumultuous ocean of difficulties. Such had been his eagerness to finish the work, that he had written in a comparatively hasty manner the three last cantos ; as a traveller, when he approaches his bourne, increases his speed. He now saw himself condemned to trace back his course ; and while weary and faint with his journey, sometimes to mend, and sometimes to alter the path over which he had passed. Even so early as the twenty-ninth of July, 1575, Tasso expresses himself in the following manner, in a letter to Gonzaga : “ Your lordship has no reason to praise the contexture of the stanza which I last sent you : but I can do no more. My vein is so dry and exhausted, that I should have need of an year’s repose, and of a cheerful journey to restore it. I shall try,

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however, to make an alteration of some kind.”* Indeed, towards the close of the first and mild revision, and before he was assailed by sophistry and zeal, Tasso seems at times almost to have repented the composition of his work. “I am more than certain (says he in another letter to his friend of the first of October 1575,) that the marvels of the wood, (Canto XVIII.) will displease my revisors, nay, almost will excite their disgust. And to say the truth, I now almost repent that I have introduced such wonders into my poem; not, that upon the whole, and as far as poetry is concerned, it is my opinion, that I either could or ought to have done otherwise. On this head, I am in the highest degree obstinate; and I persevere in thinking that epic poems are by so much the better, by how much they abound in such ornaments. But perhaps, to the particular history of Godfrey, a different species of conduct was necessary, and perhaps, also, I have not had all that respect which was due to the rigour of the present times, and to the present character of the Roman court. Hence, it is no wonder that doubts should vex me, and indeed they have been so powerful, that I have despaired of (without great difficulty) procuring an impression of my work. But for the past, and for what is done, there is no remedy; there is no-remedy, I say, since I am compelled to print my poem; if not before, at least soon after Easter, in order to be delivered from misery and agony.

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 118. See also pp. 99, 102, 121.

I swear to you, however, by the love and reverence I bear you, that, did not the circumstances of my situation constrain me, I would not print it so soon, nor for some years, nor even perhaps during my life, so much I doubt of its success." *

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Besides the fatigue of reviewing and correcting his poem, his suspense amidst contradictory criticisms, and his impatience at the delay of publication, Tasso began to be tormented by another suspicion. He believed, and seems to have had reason to believe, that some of his rivals intercepted the letters written to, and the answers sent from Rome; for the double purpose of discovering his secrets, and of seeing and availing themselves of the objections made to his poem. It is probable, indeed, that the wits at the court of Ferrara were not much pleased with his sending elsewhere his work to be reviewed, and that this did not increase their good-will to the author. In an epistle, dated the third of May 1575, and addressed to Gonzaga, Tasso beseeches him to discover how it happened that the letters, written at very different periods, arrived at the same time. In another letter, addressed to the same ecclesiastic, and written on the same day, a circumstance which shows how much he was in earnest, he thus expresses himself: "I sent the eighth and ninth cantos consigned to the postmaster here, if I rightly remember, on the sixteenth of April. Neither does your

His suspicions.

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lordship nor Scalabrino * give me any account of their reception ; nor is there any mention made of some letters which I wrote to you and to him by that post, and by one afterwards ; though he states, that he himself had been at the office. In these letters, there were many things about different parts of my poem with which I am dissatisfied ; and I shall be extremely unhappy indeed that they were lost. But what principally afflicts me, is, the doubt that they have been intercepted, and a thousand painful ideas cross my fancy. I supplicate your lordship to use all diligence to find the cantos and the letters ; and should you find them, to cause M. George, your steward, to learn from the postmaster if they came by the courier that I speak of ; and examine carefully if they have been opened or not, for I wish to be delivered from the afflicting suspicion that many of my writings have been retained for a while, and afterwards sent.” †

If melancholy, as I greatly suspect, be produced from the conjunction of irritation and debility, never was there an abode so adapted for the procreation of that monster, as the exhausted and tortured brain of Torquato. In June this year, (1575) he made a visit of about a fortnight to Bologna ; and it seems to be deducible from his writings, that his purpose was either to subject his poem to the review of an

* This gentleman (Luca Scalabrino) was a most intimate friend of Tasso, who recommended him very warmly to Scipio Gonzaga. (Vol. X. p. 250.) Of this ecclesiastic he gained the esteem and affection, and became his secretary. It was Scalabrino who generally communicated to Tasso the opinions of the revisors of his *Jerusalem*.

† *Oper.* vol. X. p. 103. See also pp. 112, 108, IX. 318.

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inquisitor, or to give him an account of some religious doubts, or discoveries, which the freeness of his nature had led him to communicate to his friends. * Soon after his return, he was seized with a violent sickness; for the Quartan, like some importunate guests, not contented with a first visit, is extremely apt to make her appearance in the summer or autumn of the succeeding years. “I am in bed, (says he in a letter to Gonzaga, dated the sixteenth of July,) I am in bed to discharge the accustomed and ordinary tribute which I pay every year to my fortune, and this is the third day of my confinement. These two days past I have been so tormented by fever, and pains, and stupor of the head, that I have sometimes thought that I would have to leave to your lordship the execution of a difficult task. To day, however, blessed be God! I am almost relieved from fever, and the stupefaction of my head is greatly diminished.” In the course of this half year, Tasso more than once complains of excessive head-ache; † but, though the languor of the fever just mentioned continued some weeks, its violence seems soon to have abated. This is deducible from a passage which I am about to quote from a letter, (dated July 20,) addressed to Gonzaga, and which is exceedingly important in a very different view.

His frequent
head-aches.

In a former chapter, it has been mentioned, that the young Duke of Urbino had, at the request of his father

Oper. vol. X. p. 372.; VIII. 254.

† *Ibid*, vol. X. pp. 107, 121, 252,

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A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.

Guidubaldo, solicited and received the hand of Lucretia of Este.* In September, 1574, she became Duchess of Urbino by the death of her father-in-law; but, at the same time, the restraint being removed which kept her husband in check, she found it necessary or convenient to return to Ferrara. This lady was greatly pleased with the company of Tasso; and at this period retained him to converse with her during an indisposition, while it appears he would have more willingly been with Alphonso at Belriguardo. "The duke," says he, "is gone to the country, and has left me here *invitus invitum*, at the request of the Duchess of Urbino, who is now taking the waters, and has need of conversation to amuse her. I read my book, and am every day many hours with her *in secretis*. I have imparted to her my design of going this October to Rome, a plan of which she has not approved. She judges that I ought not to depart from Ferrara before the edition of my book, unless perhaps with herself to Pesaro, *for that every other journey would be suspicious and odious*. She has, besides, mentioned a circumstance to me, which shews that *I am very diligently watched*, so let Scalabrino cease to have so much confidence in his opinions. At present I burn with desire, not only of the Roman journey, but also to visit, for fifteen days, my native soil; but I must at present busy myself to get disentangled from this blessed poem. Oh, what a delightful journey will it be at Easter!"†

* Page 153.

† *Oper.* vol. X. p. 116.

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.

This, as the reader will remember, was the period which the poet now fixed on for the publication of his work; but I would particularly solicit attention to the passages which I have marked in italics, and in which mention is made of Tasso's being diligently watched, and of his journey being suspected. To these I shall immediately have occasion to refer, as affording a principal element for the solution of the most important problem of his life. The person who, next to Tasso himself, was interested in the *Jerusalem*, was the Duke of Ferrara; and to him, as being highly delighted with its beauties, it was read more than once, both in detached cantos, and in an united form.* That prince seemed to redouble his attentions to his poet, and Tasso was often invited to reside at Belriguardo, where Alphonso was accustomed frequently to retire, during summer, with his most favoured courtiers. This superb and vast palace was furnished with the most magnificent apartments; was surrounded with beautiful and fruitful gardens, and irrigated by the waters of the Po. "A delightful pond," says Serassi, "furnished an abundant quantity of fishes; and its waters, pure, limpid, and shaded by the lofty poplars with which it was surrounded, afforded every convenience for the delicious recreation of bathing." No one seems to have been more alive to the charms of nature and of art, than the painter of the palace of Armida; and the elegant proportions of architecture, the magical

* *Oper.* vol. X. p. 80.

CHAP. IX.

A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.

forms of the chisel and pencil *within* ; and *without*, the flowers, the waters, and the trees, would refresh his languor, and dissipate, perhaps, for a while, the thick and louring clouds which were gathering on his mind. *

How necessary, indeed, recreation was to the weary faculties of Tasso ; how intensely his mind was occupied with his work ; and how vivid the representations of his fancy were at length become, appears very strongly from several circumstances. Thus, in a letter to Luca Scalabrino, (dated the twentieth of October, 1575,) there is the following passage :
“ To night I awaked with this verse in my mouth,

E i duo' che manda il nero adusto suolo. †

* I cannot help remarking here, in speaking of the gardens of Belriguardo, that Milton seems to have received undue praise from different authors, as founder of the art of what is called *English Gardening*. To him who possesses much, there is much given ; as to the Hercules of antiquity every great action, and by whatever champion, was attributed. We see that Leisure is painted by Milton as taking his pleasure in *trim gardens* ; but it surely required little judgment to avoid painting the hand of Art as appearing where Nature “ wantoned as in her prime.” Even Andreini takes care not to introduce clipt hedges, gravel walks, and marble statues into his Eden ; nor does there seem to be much merit in avoiding a fault which no writer of common sense could possibly have committed.

I am sensible I must excite a smile in my reader, when I propose to vindicate to Tasso the claim of that peculiar felicity of conception, which I have considered as arising in Milton from the nature of his subject. But whoever will read from the beginning of the ninth to the end of the twelfth stanza of the sixteenth canto of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, will perhaps be of the same opinion. It must be observed, too, that the garden of Tasso was not a natural one ; not even half nature and half art, but is represented as altogether a work of art raised by enchantment.—See Appendix, (No. XVI.)

† The two sent by the black and burning soil.

Intensity of
Tasso's occu-
pation with his
poem.

“ And, while repeating it, I recollected that the epithet *black* [nero,] is not suitable, since an adust soil is rather white than black, and the dark colour of the ground is a proof of fatness and humidity. I again fell asleep, and, in a dream, I read in Strabo, that the sand of Ethiopia and of Arabia is extremely white, and this morning I have found the place. You see what learned dreams I have; but as to the verse, which is in the last canto, it will be necessary to change it, and to say,

E i due, che manda il più fervente suolo.”*

In the same letter, * Tasso mentions another doubt which had occurred in a dream, with regard to the correctness of a verse in his *Jerusalem*. From these passages it appears, that the muse visited “ his slumbers nightly,” and that he was not less anxious about poetic beauty than natural truth. We learn still farther, that the mind of our poet, exhausted by extreme labour, excited by the fictions which the nature of its employment made it necessary to conjure up, irritated by opposition, and enflamed by passion, was gradually losing its voluntary power, and was progressively sinking under the influence of diseased perceptions, and of feverish illusions.

† The two sent there by the most fervid soil. *Ger. lib. Can. XX. St. 23.*

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 89.

CHAPTER X.

Jealousies of the families of Este and of Medici.—Explanation which this affords of a circumstance relating to Ariosto, and of some events in the life of Tasso.—Our poet visits Rome and Florence.—His verses to Leonora, Countess of Scandiano.—A second revision of his poem is begun.—He is made Historiographer of the family of Este. Awkward situation in which this places him.

A. D. 1575 — 1576.

ÆT. 31 — 32.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1575.
Æt. 31.

THERE are two great problems in the life of Tasso ; the first of which is, the cause or causes which led to his profound and sometimes frantic melancholy ; the second is the completely altered conduct of the duke of Ferrara. That prince, as we shall soon see, appears to have lost all regard for his once favoured poet and panegyrist ; and treated him for many years, not merely with harshness, but even with barbarity. Of this latter circumstance, the following seems

the most natural account, and it is introduced here as in some degree affording a thread, to conduct through the labyrinth of succeeding events.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.Jealousies of
the families of
Este and of
Medici.

The princes of the house of Este had always looked with jealousy and dislike on the comparatively upstart family of the Medici, who, as the action and reaction of sentiment is equal and contrary, returned with undiminished energy the aversion they inspired. The two pontiffs of the family of Medici had also, for political reasons, been extremely hostile to the dukes of Ferrara; especially Leo X., who persecuted the first Alphonso with the most unrelenting severity. For a considerable time before the reformation, almost every pope had endeavoured to extend the domain of the church; or, what was still more common, to erect a principality for one of his family, from the spoils of some of the petty princes of Italy. Leo imitated his predecessor, the turbulent Julius II. in selecting the states of Alphonso for the subject of his pillage; he not only retained Reggio and Modena, but wished to deprive him of Ferrara itself; nor was he satisfied with employing against him the fair ecclesiastical weapon of excommunication, but even, if we may believe Muratori, endeavoured to procure his assassination. * It has often been won-

* *Antichità Estensi*, vol. II. p. 323. "Conoscendo che Ferrara ben fortificata da lui (Alfonso I.) era osso troppo duro da rodere, e che le insidie passate erano andate a voto, ricorse (Leone X.) ad un vilissimo mezzo, di cui l'animo grande di Papa Giulio non sarebbe stato capace, e fu di tentare di far assassinare Alfonso. Mi vergognerei io di riferir cose cotanto ripugnanti al decoro di chi sostenteva la più riverita dignità del Cristianesimo, se il famoso Storico F. Guicciardino, ufficiale del medesimo Papa Leone, e

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1575.
Aet. 31.Explanation of
a circumstance
in the life of
Ariosto.

dered at, that Leo, who was such a promoter of literature, should have bestowed no reward on his acquaintance Ariosto, a circumstance of which the explanation is easy. That poet was a most zealous servant of the prince so detested by the pontiff; his whole poem was filled with praises of the house of Ferrara, so that little was to be hoped from a person, who, to the political and literary jealousy of his family, united private hatred against the immortalized patrons of the enchanting bard. In such circumstances, the "holy kiss," and the usual concession of a bull for the publication of his poem, was fully as much as Ariosto had reason to expect. *

Governatore di Modena, e mischiato innocentemente nell' affare, concorde anche in ciò con gli Storici Ferraresi, non avesse tanto tempo fa, levato il velo a tentativo sì enorme."

On the death of Leo, Alphonso I. struck a medal, with his own head on one side, and on the other a man who draws a lamb from the mouth of a lion rampant, with the motto from 1 Kings, C. XVII. 37. DE MANU LEONIS.

Clement VII. succeeded Leo X. in hatred to the family of Este; and, amongst other schemes of offence, formed the plan of attacking "All' improvviso di notte Ferrara allorchè la peste faceva ivi strage." *Ann. Est.* tom. II. p. 354.

* Piegossi a me dalla beata Sede,
La mano, e poi le gote ambe mi prese,
E'l santo bacio in amendue mi diede;
Di mezza quella bolla anco cortese
Mi fu della qual' ora il mio Bibiena
Espedito m' à il resto alle mie Spese.

Ariosto, *Satira*, 4ta.

When first I knelt before his sacred feet,
He bow'd him lowly from the papal seat;
He grasp'd my hand, with friendly warmth address'd,
And on each cheek a holy kiss impress'd;

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1575.

Act. 31.

Alphonso II. the patron of Tasso, had, before his marriage with Barbara of Austria, espoused in early youth Lucretia, daughter of Cosmo de Medici. That lady did not live long ; and, owing to certain circumstances, this marriage, instead of cementing, only widened the breach between the two courts. But what principally disgusted the duke of Ferrara, and, in a person of his haughty disposition, fermented rage into malignity, was a violent dispute about precedence, which had for several years subsisted between him and Cosmo his father-in-law. This, after the keenest contest, had been lately, and, it would appear, unjustly, given against him by Pius V., who conferred on his rival the title of Grand Duke of Tuscany. The rancour which this occasioned in the lofty mind of Alphonso (who thus seemed to have fallen from the elevation of his ancestors,) is scarcely to be conceived ;

Nay more, the common bull allow'd with ease,
And I, much favour'd man ! discharg'd the fees.

The Ferrarese poet had seen so much of papal pretension, that he seems to have lost some of his orthodoxy, and in his *Limbo of Vanity in the Moon*, places the famous deed of Constantine, upon which the Roman pontiffs founded so much. The passage is to be found in *Orlando Furioso*, Canto 34. St. 80., and is thus translated by Milton :

And to be short, at last his guide him brings
Into a goodly valley, where he sees
A mighty mass of things strangely confus'd ;
Things that on earth were lost, or were abus'd——
Then pass'd he to a flowry mountain green,
Which once smell'd sweet, now stinks as odiously ;
This was the gift (if you the truth will have,)
That Constantine to good Sylvester gave.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.

and we have seen, * that, after the marriage of his presumptive heir, Don Cæsar, with a daughter of Cosmo, the duke of Ferrara always treated him with aversion or neglect.

We are now prepared to understand the allusions in the letter of Tasso, towards the end of last chapter, in which he tells Gonzaga, that he was diligently watched, and that he had been counselled by the duchess of Urbino not to go to Rome before the publication of his book; as that would be an odious and suspicious journey. Our poet, as we have seen, had become disgusted with Ferrara, and had written to Gonzaga to endeavour to provide him new patronage. This ecclesiastic had, it appears, applied to the Cardinal de' Medici, who, fond of literature, and at the same time from a wish to deprive Alphonso of a panegyrist so illustrious, had promised to provide for him either in his own service, or in that of the grand duke his brother. Hints of this kind had appeared in the intercepted correspondence, and this, joined with the fears of the transcription of his poem, accounts for the uncommon anxiety of Tasso upon this subject. Suspicions seem to have been excited in the mind of Alphonso, who probably felt alarmed, lest his name should not be associated with the immortal work, which had been written at his court. In such circumstances, the departure of our bard to Rome, notwithstanding the solicitations of a person of such weight and influence as the duchess of Urbino, has certainly the appearance of obstinacy and imprudence. It fur-

Offers made to
Tasso by the
Medici.

nished to his enemies a pretext to accuse him of an inconstant and ungrateful disposition, and was always in the progress of his life reflected on with bitterness, as one of the principal sources of his misfortunes. *

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.

The ostensible object of Tasso's departure to Rome, was to receive the indulgence granted to those who should visit that city during the jubilee, and to confer in person with the revisors of his poem. Alphonso, desirous as much as possible to hasten the publication of the *Jerusalem*, granted permission; and wrote to the cardinal his brother, to show the poet countenance and favour. He arrived in Rome about the middle of November, where he was kindly received by many, and by none more affectionately than by Scipio Gonzaga. This ecclesiastic introduced him to Cardinal Ferdinand de Medici, afterwards grand duke of Tuscany,

Tasso arrives
at Rome.

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 228. "Il principio, e la cagione della mia infelicità fu la mia venuta a Roma nell'anno Santo; invitandomi il Signor Scipione Gonzaga, ora Cardinale;" and in a letter to this prelate, vol. X. p. 387, he thus expresses himself. "Ma voi anco non potete negare di non avermi, volendomi giovare, gravemente offeso, e di non aver porta alcuna occasione ed alcuna quasi necessità a i miei errori." I know not whether Tasso alludes to the Medici in the following passage of a letter of the 31st of March, 1575, when talking of his purpose of leaving Ferrara, and of living at Rome. "I per Patroni non gli vò in alcun modo, nè ora nè poi; pero V. S. tronchi ogni occasione, che senza alcun mio prò possa solo portarmi una vana soddisfazione, ma con molto mio danno possa muovere la mia vanità a vaneggiare. Avvertisca di non scrivere a (Ferrara) sopra questo particolare cosa, che smarrendosi la lettera, e capitando in man d'altri potesse nocermi. Dell'altre pratiche si può scrivere più liberamente." *Opere*, vol. X. p. 96. If Tasso, as is probable, here alludes to the Medici, and if Scipio Gonzaga had in a manner constrained him, though unwilling to listen, as he afterwards did, to the offers of that family, this ecclesiastic might indeed be considered as the cause of his ruin.

CHAP.

A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.

who behaved extremely courteously, and knowing that Tasso was dissatisfied with his residence at Ferrara, repeated his offers of protection. These overtures were not at this time accepted, but their having been made, and the court he paid to that cardinal, could not be very grateful to his patrons. Besides this prince, and some distinguished persons belonging to his court, Torquato was introduced to whoever was at this period most illustrious and dignified at Rome, and, amongst others, to the nephews of Gregory XIII. who at this very time was planning another crusade. To this pontiff he pays the following high compliment in the XIth canto of his poem, when describing the solemn religious service performed by the Christian army, and the chaunting of the litany before their assault of Jerusalem :

Chiamano a Te che sei Pietra, e sostegno
Della magion di Dio, fondato e forte;
Ove ora il nuovo Successor tuo degno
Di grazie, e di perdono apre le porte. *

These verses, as Serassi has for the first time remarked, are complimentary to Gregory XIII. and allude to the spi-

* Thee too they call ! the firm supporting rock,
On which the Lord his mighty church did rear ;
Where now thy new successor doth unlock
The blissful gates of Grace, and mercy dear.

St. viii.

It is from this pontiff (Gregory XIII.) that the Gregorian calendar is denominated.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.

ritual treasures which were now opened by the jubilee. In the morning, Torquato visited the churches, and performed those acts of piety, which are prescribed for the purpose of obtaining a plenary indulgence; in the evening he waited on some of his literary friends, particularly on Sperone, to whom he paid great deference notwithstanding the grudge which existed between them. There is a habit that one acquires of seeing certain persons, which sometimes survives friendship, and brings people together, when all real cordiality is lost. Sperone, too, in spite of his surly snarling disposition, might have at bottom a true regard for Torquato; and in such cases, though one is frequently put into a passion, one can pardon in an old man a vast deal of moroseness. There is a tradition that Tasso had never been able to express the velocity with which Erminia descends from horseback to aid her seemingly dying Tancred; and that one day, while walking with some friends on the bank of the Tyber, he saw a young man, who was advancing at full gallop, fall from his horse. Upon this, it is said the poet immediately burst forth with the fine verse,

Non scese nò, precipitò di sella. *

* She lighted—No—She threw herself on earth.

Can. XIX. St. 104.

Milton has a passage very similar to this, when describing the journey of Satan to the world,

—— from Pole to Pole,

He views in breadth; and without longer pause,

Downright into the world's first region *throws*

His flight precipitant.

P. L. Book III. 562.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1575.
Act. 31.Visits Flo-
rence.1576.
Act. 32.Returns to Fer-
rara.

On the twenty-ninth of December, Torquato left Rome, without, as appears, having come to any fixed plan relative to his situation. He returned by the way of Sienna, where, according to his foolish custom, he read a part of his poem,* and arrived at Florence about the sixth of January, 1576. This was the first time he had an opportunity of seeing that magnificent city, and of becoming acquainted with some of the literary characters, with which it has always abounded. His arrival at Ferrara happened about the middle of January, and his reception from the duke and princesses was polite. I have already mentioned the great favour which Pigna, first secretary of Alphonso, enjoyed at court, and the obsequious attention he met with from Torquato. Such, however, was his literary jealousy, that he viewed with a malignant eye the author of the *Aminta* and *Jerusalem*; a circumstance which, in a rival poet, was exceedingly natural. Pigna died at this period, and was succeeded, as secretary, by Doctor Anthony Montecatino, a man who was considered as a profound philosopher, but whose philosophy was at least equalled by his malevolence. This personage, whose ill-will had not the excuse of that of Pigna, had been friendly to Torquato at his first arrival at Ferrara; and had assisted him in the formation of his fifty *Amorous Conclusions*.† Whether, however, he feared the favour which Tasso had acquired, or was envious of his literary

glory, he acted in such a manner, that our poet found reason to regret the death of his predecessor, and often he complains of Montecatino as the most bitter of his foes, and as almost the cause of his misfortunes.*

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.

In February, this year, arrived at Ferrara, Eleonora Sanvitali, (who had been newly married to the count of Scandiano,) accompanied by Barbara Sanseverina, countess of Sala, her mother-in-law. The former of these ladies was a young woman, who, to great beauty and graceful manners, united a noble character and skill in the arts. The lady Barbara was likewise very lovely; and, in the festivals at court during the carnival, “she appeared,” says Serassi, “with her hair fashioned in the form of a crown; which, with the beauty of her countenance, and the majesty of her figure, gave her the air of a Juno. The charms of Eleonora, however, were rendered still more impressive by the freshness of youth, and by a certain virgin modesty; her under-lip, particularly, which pouted forth a little, was exquisitely beautiful.”† The rosy lip of the young countess, and the coronet of her

* *Opere*, vol. IX. 192, 193, 412. See, for a character of this person, Tiraboschi *Soriana*, &c. tom. VII. p. 347. Muratori *Antichità Estensi*, p. II. cap. 14. This latter writer accuses Montecatino of having betrayed Ferrara into the hands of Clement VIII., and of having thus in the highest degree contributed to the fall of a family which had cherished and patronised him. “Doveva egli (says he) forse aver trovato ne’ libri della *Politica* d’Aristotile da lui comentati, che l’ingratitude verso la casa d’Este, dalla quale aveva egli e i suoi maggiori ricevuto tanti benefizj, cessava d’essere un mostro, quando s’entrava in un mare di più grandi speranze, bench’egli poi non salisse più oltre che al grado di camerier segreto del Papa, con rimaner deluso forte nelle sue sognate indee.” Vol. II. p. 408.

† *Vita del Tasso*, p. 217.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.

step-mother, were the admiration of all the courtiers of Ferrara. Tasso invoked his muse on the occasion, and produced two sonnets, which were much admired by the duke, and probably not less by the ladies themselves. "I have composed (says he in a letter dated the first of February, 1576,) two sonnets, one to the Countess of Sala, who had her hair fashioned in the form of a crown; the other to her daughter-in-law, who has something of the Austrian lip. The duke, on hearing them, was kind and pleased; but I wish for fruit, not for flowers. These sonnets I do not send you, as I am not certain whether they be good. This I know well, that having, as it were, in spite of myself, repeated them to Maddalò, he heard them with a countenance, which was in the highest degree severe. Be this, however, as it may, I know not by whom much better ones could be written." In addition to the sonnets here alluded to, Tasso composed several other little poems in praise of these ladies, which procured him their favourable notice, and had the effect of kindling with greater violence the rage and envy of his foes. †

The Countess
of Scandiano.

"Eleonora, Countess of Scandiano, (says Serassi,) is the second of the three Leonoras, imaged by the Marquis of Villa, for the purpose of rendering more agreeable his romance of the life of Tasso; and she has also been introduced by Gol-

† The sonnet addressed to the Countess of Sala, alluded to in Tasso's letter, is to be found *Oper.* vol. VI. p. 60. It begins *Donna per cui*, &c. Several other sonnets are to be met with in the same volume, addressed to this lady.

doni, into the comedy which derives its title from our poet. I can affirm, that the third Leonora never existed ; and that it is untrue that one of the damsels of the Princess Leonora, who is sometimes praised by Tasso, had this name. She to whom he discovers some attachment was called Laura ; and the other, for whom he wrote the most beautiful canzone, *O con le Grazie eletta, e con gli Amori*, was a maiden of the Countess of Scandiano. This young woman, too, was named Olympia, not Leonora ; nor was she (as Manso affirms) in the service of the princess.” *

As Tasso seems greatly to have admired the Countess of Scandiano, I shall here subjoin his sonnet on the lip of that lady :

That lip, which, (like the rose that morn with dew
Has largely fed,) so moist, so sweetly swells ;
That lip approaches thus, by Cupid's spells,
To tempt to kiss, and still that kiss renew.
But, ah ! ye lovers, though so fair its hue,
Fly far away—for in these flowery cells,
Mid those sweet roses, Love, the serpent, dwells,
And should you kiss, you bid to Peace adieu.
I too was snar'd, I too believ'd that bliss
Liv'd on a rosy lip ; I, too, believ'd
Its nectar'd sweetness rapture would impart ;
But, ah ! I found, like Tantalus deceiv'd,
That nought remains behind the empty kiss,
But Love's fell poison, rankling at the heart. †

* *Vita del Tasso*, p. 217.

† Quel labbro, che le rose han colorito,
Molle si sporge, e tumidetto in fuore,
Spinto per arte, mi cred'io d' Amore,
A fare a i baci insidioso invito.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.

This sonnet is only one of many compositions in which Eleonora, Countess of Scandiano, is celebrated by our poet. One of the most beautiful of these is a canzone, addressed to Olympia, a female attendant of that lady. With Olympia, Tasso pretends to be in love; but the canzone is chiefly complimentary to the mistress, and the poor waiting-maid is represented only as a last resort. Of this poem, a part has been translated by Mr Hoole, but in a manner which is too elegiac, and which converts the gallantry of the original into the deepest passion. The verses of Mr Hoole, however, are pretty, and I shall, (taking the liberty to change the two first lines,) subjoin them here.

“ Oh with the Loves, and with the Graces join'd !
In concord blest, to fill an envied place,”
Attendant on the fairest of her kind,
Whose charms excel the charms of human race.

Fain would I view—but dare not lift my sight,
To mark the splendour of her piercing eyes;
Her heavenly smiles, her bosom's dazzling white,
Her nameless graces, that the soul surprise.

Amanti, alcun non fia cotanto ardito,
Ch'osi appressarsi, ove tra fiore, e fiore,
Si sta qual angue, ad attoscarvi il core
Quel fiero intento, Io'l veggio, e ve l'addito
Io, ch'altre volte fui nell' amorose
Insidie colto, or ben lo riconosco,
E le discopro, o giovinetti a voi :
Quasi pomi di Tantalò, le rose
Fansi all' incontro, e s'allontanano poi;
Sol resta Amor, che spira fiamma, e toscò.

To thee I then direct my humbler gaze,
 To thee uncensur'd may my hopes aspire;
 Less awful are the sweets thy look displays,
 I view, and, kindling as I view, desire.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.

Though brown thy hue, yet lovely is thy frame;
 (So blooms some violet the virgin's care,)
 I burn—yet blush not to confess my flame,
 Nor scorn the empire of a menial fair.*

Notwithstanding these small occasional infidelities, Tasso continued true to his great work; of which the second, and, if I may call it so, the superstitious and metaphysical revision was now begun. The metaphysician was our acquaintance Sperone Speroni, who had confidently asserted, when Tasso began his *Jerusalem*, that the subject did not admit of being wrought into a legitimate epic poem, and who was

* O colle Grazie eletta, e con gli Amori,
 Fanciulla avventurosa,
 A servir a colei, che Dea somiglia;
 Poichè'l mio sguardo in lei mirar non osa,
 I raggi, e gli splendori,
 E'l bel seren degli occhi, e delle ciglia,
 Nè l'alta meraviglia,
 Che ne discopre il lampeggiar del riso,
 Nè quanto ha di celeste il petto e'l volto,
 Io gli occhi a te rivolto,
 E nel tuo vezzosetto, e lieto viso
 Dolcemente m'affisso:
 Bruna sei tu, ma bella,
 Qual vergine viola: e del tuo vago
 Sembiante Io sì m'appago,
 Che non disdegno signoria d'ancella.

Oper. vol. VI. p. 82.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.

S. Antoniano.

now unwilling to confess his mistake. * Silvio Antoniano was the name of the zealot, a man to whose scruples, real or affected, the distraction of our poet seems in a high degree imputable. Antoniano was born of poor parents at Rome, in 1540, and was, in his youth, one of the most distinguished improvisatori who has every been in Italy. Several of his performances in this way, are mentioned by Tiraboschi, and by Mazzuchelli. † The account of one of these I shall subjoin in a note, as it perhaps suggested the contest of the Lyrist and Nightingale, in the beautiful poem in which Strada, in his *Prohusions*, professes to imitate Claudian. ‡

* *Oper.* vol. X. p. 84.

† Tiraboschi *Storia*, &c. tom. VII. P. III. p. 192. Mazzuchelli, *Scritt. Ital.* tom. I. P. II. p. 856.

‡ This account is given in a letter of Bartolommeo Ricci to Giambatista Pigna, to whom he describes a rural dinner, which he had given to his friends at his villa. "Sylvius post prandium ad Lyræ cecinit primum. Ut se de amicitia dicturum non paucioribus versibus proposuit, convertit cantum in meum villicum, quem ab optima agri colendi ratione maxime commendavit. Fortè meus Architriclinus sponsæ desiderio tractus quæ eum non longe ad suam villam expectabat, mirè properabat. Hujus desiderii Sylvium clanculum in aurem certiore ut feci, tum is, nosti quam promptus sit, in hujus discesum versus suos convertit, atque amatorium ejus desiderium ita expressit, ut nihil melius ... Sed, rem miram audi. Dum canit Sylvius, advolat philumena avicula, in proprii ædibus moro consistit, coepit et ipsa illo suo vario gutture ad Lyræ sonum respondere, atque ita variè, itaque artificiosè, ut diceret eam dedita opera in certamen cum Sylvio venisse. Animadvertit ille, atque ad eam aviculam aliquot versus, ut ceteros omnes, optimè compegit."

"An intelligent Persian, (says Sir W. Jones, in his *Dissertation on the Musical Modes of the Hindus*,) declared he had more than once been present when a celebrated Lutanist, surnamed Bulbul, (the Nightingale,) was playing to a large company in a grove near Schiraz, where he distinctly saw the nightingales trying to vie with the musician; sometimes warbling on the trees, sometimes fluttering from branch to branch, as if they wished to approach the instrument, and at length dropping on the ground in a kind of ecstasy, from which they were soon raised, he assured me, by a change in the mode."

The eminence of Antoniano as an improvisatore procured him friends and patrons ; he was appointed professor of belles lettres in Ferrara at the early age of seventeen ; and soon afterward was recalled to Rome by Pius IV., who made him tutor and Latin secretary of his nephew Cardinal Borromeo. Thus brought into the Roman court, and placed in the high road of preferment, Antoniano devoted himself wholly to theological studies, and became a model of acrimonious sanctitude. He was raised to the purple by Pope Clement VIII., in the year 1599, and died at Rome in 1603.

Antoniano seems to have retained very little music in his soul at the time the *Jerusalem* was put into his hands. Compelled himself, by the mode of life he had adopted, to quit the flowery paths of poetry, and that fame to which they may chance to lead, it is not improbable that he beheld, with a secret languishing and disquiet, the dawning glory of Tasso. No worldly dignity can indemnify the man of genius for the want of literary or scientific fame ; nor can even the purest spirituality of ideas extinguish this passion. He who is formed to attain literary eminence, and who sacrifices it to the petty recompences of common ambition, (like the once upright soul which has abandoned virtue,) cannot have forsaken it without reluctance, nor will ever reflect on it without remorse.

Towards the conclusion of the first revision, we have seen that Tasso was exhausted and perplexed, so that he was not certainly in the very best disposition to resist the attacks of

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Weariness of
Tasso at the
beginning of
the second re-
vision.

new assailants. “ I expect,” says he, (in a letter to Scipio Gonzaga, of the twenty-fourth of January, 1576,) “ I expect, with the most earnest longing, that your lordship will inform me of the state of the revision, both in what regards art, and in what concerns religion. I am toiling at present upon the fourteenth canto ; and truly I may give my employment the name of toil, since it is altogether without delight. The muse no longer inspires the wonted spirit ; so that in the new stanzas which I add, there will not, I believe, be any excess of ornament or of subtilty. I hope, however, that the verses will have the merit of clearness and facility, without meanness ; and I expect to reconcile two things, which, if not incompatible, at least cannot be associated without difficulty ; I mean the necessity, or (if I may say so) fatality of Rinaldo, with the superiority of Godfrey, and with that dependence which the whole action of the poem ought to have upon this hero. And when I say superiority, I do not merely mean supremacy of rank, but I wish it to be expressed, that Godfrey was as necessary as Rinaldo, only that the one was essential as a captain, the other as a soldier.” * After remarking that an example of this sort of heroic copartnership might be found in Sophocles, Tasso regrets that he cannot go on, as the portmanteau, containing the fourteenth and fifteenth cantos of his poem, had not arrived from Rome ; a circumstance which gives him much anxiety. He

* *Oper.* vol. X p. 127.

adds some critical reflections, and concludes with saying, “ Let the reading of my cantos be secret, for the love of God, and have peculiar care that no copy be taken.”

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In a second letter to Gonzaga, (of the twentieth February,) Tasso writes thus : “ I shall follow my usual custom of giving an account to your lordship of the state of the revision. Know then, that after I had given to the first half of the fourteenth canto that degree of perfection which was in my power, I began to review the fifteenth, which reached me opportunely ; and my progress has been such, that nothing remains to be changed except a few verses. I have removed the marvel of the hair, following in this rather the judgment of others, than a certain secret complacency of my own ; and that which at first was attributed to the hair of the fatal damsel, is now assigned to an ordinary veil.* I begin the navigation from Ascalon, a place which is very near Jerusalem, and the marvellous ship proceeds by Gaza, in order that some of the preparations of the King of Egypt may be seen by the two knights ; and they here learn from

Progress of the
revision.

* From the varie Lezioni, printed in the *Opere del Tasso*, it appears that canto XV. St. 7. stood originally as follows :

Come la nobil coppia hebbe raccolta,
 Colei rallenta à la sua nave il morso ;
 E siede in poppa al suo governo, e volta
 La tien là dove l'onde han maggior corso.
 La chioma, ch'avvolgea sì lunga, e folta
 Ver quella parte, ch'è contraria al dorso,
 Dispiega, e spande à l'aura, e l'aura come
 In vela suol curvando empie le chiome.

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the damsel, that the royal army is not yet wholly assembled. The ship arrives in eight days at the islands. In the *Morgante*, Rinaldo rides on horseback, in a single day, from Egypt to Roncesvalles ; and I quote the *Morgante*, because this part of it was made by Marsilio Ficino, and is full of theological learning. And, truly, the notice which is here given of the assemblage of the pagan host, will be much to the purpose, both because it might seem that I have delayed too long to speak of it, since it is scarcely mentioned till the seventeenth canto ; and, besides, lest the tissue of this canto might appear too strictly episodical, it is proper to interweave something which has a peculiar connection with the main fable. The same mixture of things, pertaining to the principal fable, has been employed in the texture of the preceding canto, so that these two cantos will not be so peculiarly appropriated to Rinaldo, but that Godfrey, and the other principal heroes, may also have their portion. I terminate afterwards the navigation in the Fortunate Isles, because they appeared to me the most opportune place which could be found beyond the Strait, both on account of their vicinity, and for the other reasons that I told you. Besides, the particular description of the islands brings with it something, I know not what, which is strange and soothing ; and as some of them are not inhabited, I find in them all the conditions which I could desire In Venice the suspicion of the plague is renewed ; and your lordship may imagine in what manner I am affected with this news. I see, by a variety of circumstances, the objects which I had in view

removed so far, that it is impossible for me to say how, or when I shall attain them." *

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In another letter, written the same month, and addressed to the same friend, Tasso, after some remarks on the voyage of the two knights, who are sent by Godfrey to recal Rinaldo, proceeds as follows : " The slowness of Signor † vexes me, and also his rigour. I believe it is your lordship's meaning, that he is rigorous in those points that concern the inquisition ; and if this be the case, I suspect that my poem would be reviewed with less severity by the inquisitor himself, who is at present in Ferrara, where he will remain some days. I mean, however, to be very subtle, for I shall not shew to the friar the censures which seem to me too severe ; but I shall simply, and without any comment, request him to read the censured verses, and if he shall pass them as good, I shall seek nothing more. It would give me little pleasure, if this rigour of Signor [Antoniano] extended also to my poetic art ; for I am now determined neither to cancel nor change, except some things which seem to me necessary, and connected with the fable, and the structure of the whole. I know well that, on a subject like poetry, which is not an exact science, but only probable and indefinite, many objections may be made, which, however futile, seem well-founded. And, truly, if I were so inclined, I could make fifty oppositions to the *Œdipus Tyrannus*, in a style such as many critics

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 128.

† In the original this is blank, but from several concurring circumstances, it appears that Antoniano is meant.

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make to other poems ; yet, in spite of all that, I consider it as an admirable tragedy. This I say from a doubt that he will shew rather acumen and subtilty, in judging of my work, than a certain soundness and rectitude of judgment. For this reason I do not wish to be told what every snarling cur barks against my poem, nor, indeed, shall I lose my time in answering them. It vexes me that, by shewing my production, I have given occasion to the prate of pedants ; and I myself am in part to blame, as I have put objections into the mouths of others. Thus, when reading my twelfth canto at Sienna, I said that the word *guarda* had not been used by any one ; I noted also the verse in which is the term *avvolto*, and now what an outcry is raised about each of these words ! But enough of such people. I am ashamed of myself that I care either for their blame or praise.*

Scruples of
Antoniano.

“ Your lordship (says Tasso, in another epistle to Gonzaga, written in the beginning of March,) your lordship hinted something of the extreme severity of Signor [Antoniano,] and of this I had likewise been advised by M. Luca, [Scalabrino,] who particularly fears, that some doubt will be raised about the episode of Sophronia. Should this doubt extend only to some single verse, as

Che vi portaro i creduli devoti,

it would not vex me ; but it would give me infinite dis-

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 130.

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quietude, if the scruple extends to the whole substance of the episode. In this case, I am desirous that your lordship, by some dexterous mode, should render him satisfied ; for should the digression be approved by the judgment of two inquisitors, I may content myself with their decision without farther anxiety. To-morrow, although it be the last day of the carnival, I shall wait on the Ferrarese inquisitor, for the purpose of delivering myself from this suspense. In the revision I have not made any progress for many days, and hence the praises of the house of Este are still wanting in the fourteenth canto. The remainder has almost its last perfection ; and the canto will be suitably long, as, without the praises, (which I mean to be short,) it already amounts to seventy-nine stanzas. And to confess, as I am wont, my vanity, I am pretty well pleased with the improvement ; or, to speak more accurately, with the total reformation of this canto. For I have not only accommodated to my taste all that pertained to the fable, but I have improved many things relative to the allegory, of which I have conceived, I know not how, a greater value than I once did. In short, I do not leave any thing which will not bear the hammer ; and for this reason I wish to remove, from the fifteenth canto, the battle with the monster ; since, in truth, this monster was quite idle in the allegory.* Besides, in this I shall please,

* This battle with the monster is preserved in the *Varie Lezioni* of the *Jerusalem* ; and its being cancelled from the text of that poem, does not seem a circumstance much

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for another reason, the judgment of Sig. Barga, who is not fond of the marvellous. In place of this monster, I will introduce a description of the fountain of laughter, celebrated by many, and in particular by Petrarch, and attributed by fame, and by geographers, to the Fortunate Isles. If in this the two warriors had drunk, they would have died; and from thence shall issue a streamlet, which shall form a little lake. Now you shall see of what use this lake will be to me; and, in fact, such an one as I describe is placed by geographers upon the summit of one of the mountains in those islands; and, besides, this fountain and this lake will serve wonderfully for the allegory. These changes will prevent my being ready by Easter; and hence I support, with less uneasiness, the obstruction given by the plague, which can now no longer be dissembled by the Venetians; nor do I know (as it has begun so early in the season) whether we shall be able to protect ourselves from it at Ferrara. Inform M. Luca, that I have received his letter, and that this mix-

to be regretted. Its erasure, however, gives a kind of abruptness to two verses in canto XVI. St. 35.

Intanto Armida de la regal porta
Mirò giacere il fier custode estinto.

"There is an obscurity (says Mr Hoole) in this passage, for no mention has been made before by the poet of such a circumstance." Tasso had given a long description of the monster's resistance and death, which had been expunged. Such a description, however, (though it would have rendered the two verses just quoted quite intelligible,) was not absolutely necessary, as one may say, "Armida seeing the watch-dog slaughtered at the door, suspected some mischief," although no previous account was given of the manner in which it had been killed.

ture of and of Signor does not please me ; *
 for, upon the whole, I have no trust in [Sperone ;] no trust
 at all." †

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The anxiety of Tasso to print his poem at Venice, arose from the circumstance, that the republic would not grant a privilege, except for such works as were printed in that city. ‡ His impatience, both on account of the various obstacles which intervened, and the objections of his revisors, was wrought up to the highest pitch, as he was eager at the same time to reap the fruits of so many vigils, and to leave Ferrara, where his life was rendered miserable. Whether to have a pretence for quitting this city, in case of a refusal, or some other undiscovered motive, Tasso applied for the place of historiographer to the family of Este. This office had been held by Pigna, who, shortly before his death, had published a history of that family, which, however, had brought down the tale only to the year 1476. The application was successful ; and the following is the account which our poet gives of his sentiments, on the occasion, to Scipio Gonzaga. " My offer has been accepted, to my very great displeasure, seeing that so decent a pretext for a sudden departure, has been removed. Now, what can I do ? Shall I oppose my ancient and just desire of living among men ? Shall I clip

* I have strong reasons for supposing that these blanks should be filled up with the names of Sperone and Antoniano.

† *Oper.* vol. X. p. 131.

‡ *Opere*, vol. X. p. 129.

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the wings of my fortune, which afterwards may never grow ?
 Alas ! may I so act as not to have reason to repent, when repentance will be of no avail. I comfort myself that I was not requested, but made the request ; that I was the agent, not the instrument ; and that thus I may desist from my demand, and cease to animate what, if not stirred, may remain at rest ; for, indeed, it seemed to me that my proposal was received rather graciously than fervently. I judge, therefore, that I may, without much difficulty, extricate myself from this enterprise ; and even though the obstacles were greater, I must, of necessity, surmount them. When treating of the times of Leo and of Clement, it would be impossible for me not to displease those to whom I am under obligations, and whom I am so desirous to satisfy.* I promise absolutely, therefore, (whatever may be the consequence,) to abandon this enterprise, into which I entered too willingly ; and which, however, I should sustain less weakly than is the opinion of some of whom your lordship makes mention, and who one day may have occasion to alter their sentiments. With regard to my other resolution, I doubt not but I shall soon be able to effect it, conformably to your desire and to my own. It is true that it is impossible that this can take place so soon as it might have done had my offer been rejected ; but it will be a de-

* These popes having (as already stated) had bitter quarrels with the Dukes of Ferrara, it was impossible that a historian could satisfy equally the family of Este and that of Medici, so that Tasso was brought into a complete dilemma.

I v, not of years, but of days, or, at least, of a few months. CHAP. X.
 Nothing can or ought to detain me here but a gift, which, A. D. 1576.
 if bestowed soon, will be small, and not in proportion to my Act. 32.
 labours; if in any sort an equivalent to these, it will be
 tardy. A small present I would refuse; and by asking li-
 berty to depart, might prevent a large one. Indeed, a speedy
 and suitable present would, in this region, be a monster and
 prodigy of nature: and therefore, as of a thing impossible,
 no account is to be taken of it. To increase this impossibi-
 lity, I shall use every artifice in my power. This is all that I
 can at present say concerning my will; when it shall be
 time to proceed farther, I shall advise your lordship of the
 nature of my purposes; nor shall I say a thing without your
 knowledge or counsel. Meanwhile I shall proceed in lay-
 ing some foundations, but foundations, not of building, but
 of destruction. *

There seems, alas! to have been no necessity for new ma-
 terials to fix immoveably the basis of our poet's ruin. By
 purposing to leave Ferrara, and to enter into the service of
 a hostile family, Tasso had perhaps irretrievably lost the fa-
 vour of Alphonso; and, on the other hand, by continuing
 to remain at Ferrara, after he had probably been induced
 to promise he would depart, he had abated the good-will of
 the family of Medici. This want of resolution in his friend,
 seems to have been very displeasing to Gonzaga; and, in-

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deed, few things are more teasing than, after undergoing much trouble to provide for a person, to have the offer rejected when it has at last been made. Unfortunately, the same irritability of the nerves which makes every inconvenience a torture, and produces a desire of change, causes that timidity and irresolution which makes every change alarming. It would appear, that Scipio now doubted that the poet had not really wished to leave Ferrara, and that this office of historiographer was only a pretence for remaining. On these subjects Tasso writes him a most anxious letter, in which he endeavours to remove these suspicions, and beseeches him to preserve him in the favour of the Medici. It is dated at Ferrara, on the twenty-fourth of March, (1576.) “ I have already written to your lordship upon the subject concerning which I now address you ; but as the letter was not sent off, I have suppressed it, and I now write you somewhat differently, though this diversity does not proceed from change of mind, but from novelty of accidents and occasions. That I said the truth, when I informed you that I offered myself to this office, and that my offer was accepted, I shall not now endeavour to persuade your lordship, either by new assertions, or by the testimony of others, since I have a most firm belief that you will credit my simple affirmation. But if, for the satisfaction, not of your lordship, but of others, it be desirable that I should strengthen my assertion by proof, Canigiano, the Tuscan ambassador at this court, can confirm its truth by his evidence. Indeed, that I

supremely wish to leave Ferrara, and that I have likewise an intention of leaving it, must of itself seem in the highest degree probable, to whoever considers the circumstances of my situation. I trust it is known to your lordship, that my deportment never belies the feelings of my heart ; and I swear by the love you bear me, and by my observance towards you, that hitherto no change of design has taken place, nor, I believe, will take place in me. It is true that, by how much longer the impression of my book is delayed, by so much more must the success of my deliberation be rendered dubious, and more subjected to a diversity of accidents. Hence, as I do not wish to promise any thing but what I would absolutely fulfil, though my ruin should be the consequence, I cannot resolve to make any absolute engagement. Of this, however, your lordship may be assured, that, under no circumstances, shall I avail myself with others of the offers which you have made me, not even though I hoped to gain by it the riches of Minos. Be assured, also, that I shall not bind myself so firmly by any new tie, but what it will be easy for me to unloose myself when I please. I may add, that as the present delay makes me, on the one hand, dread some impediment, so, on the other, it affords a hope that some occasion may spring up, in the mean time, which will facilitate the path of this double passage. Your lordship will find a letter inclosed, which was written to me from Poland, by M. Ascanio. I know that this M. Ascanio spoke of me, and of my poem, at great length to the duke,

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and hence my humours of last year had their origin.* He now writes me; I have replied, and requested an explanation; and perhaps I shall hear something from him which may make me adopt a resolution such as I never expected. You will likewise observe, from a letter of my sister, the necessity in which she is, and my obligation to succour her; and how, in the midst of poverty such as mine, I have been constrained to give her some assistance. You will see, lastly, from what the Duchess [of Urbino] writes me, that I am suspected so much, that my declarations are disbelieved. All these letters have almost turned my brain. God pity me. Your lordship, both in return for my attachment, and even from Christian charity, seems to me obliged to have regard, in this business, rather to my welfare, than to the satisfaction of others; not that more is due to me than to them, (for this were an overweening claim,) but because, on my side, every thing is at stake which regards both honour, and the utility and comfort of life; to them the event is unimportant, and the mode indifferent. I supplicate, therefore, your lordship, with my whole heart, that if, (which, indeed, is not reasonably to be expected,) if you cannot keep others to a contract to which I delay to be a party, you will at least maintain in their minds the memory and desire of me, so that access may always be had to their favour and protection, if not with terms such as have been proffered me, at least not

* Ascanio Giraldini was, by birth, a Jew, (page 160.) and was employed in many affairs of consequence by the Duke of Ferrara.

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much inferior. And certainly they ought, in this matter, to correspond with the wishes of your lordship, for many good reasons, which cannot here be mentioned. I shall add only, that it would be suitable to their magnanimity to shew that love of literature, and not hatred towards others, has prompted them to invite me with an offer so large.*

Nothing can paint more strongly than this letter, the uneasiness and anxiety of our poet. Gonzaga, whether he despaired of overcoming his irresolution, or pitied his perplexity, seems, in consequence, to have written him in a very soothing and affectionate manner. This appears from an epistle of Tasso to his friend, of which the following is a translation: "The letters of your lordship, upon whatever subject they are written, and at whatever time they arrive, are always not only most welcome, but most sweet; but never did I receive one so welcome, or so sweet, as that which reached me yesterday. For although I might have received intelligence more desirable, and more calculated to free me from the irresolution of my present state, yet, (as in no other has the love you bear me, and the goodness and sincerity of a mind, not less jealous of my honour than ardent for my interests, been more clearly manifested;) it is

* *Oper.* vol. X. p. 133. "Dirò solo, che alla lor magnanimità è convenevole il mostrar, ch'amor della virtù, non odio verso altri, gli abbia già mossi ad invitarmi con invito così largo." It is evident, from the conclusion of this letter, that the proffers made by the Medici had been considerable; and that Tasso doubted that they proceeded less from compliment to him, than pique at his patrons.

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just that this should be valued above all others, in the proportion that one ought to prefer the real benevolence of a patron to every acquisition of gold and silver. It is true I have never doubted the love you bear me, of which, indeed, I have seen, on so many occasions, such effectual signs; yet (let me confess the truth) I could not but have some suspicion, that your lordship, from a supreme desire of my advancement, or from a certain tenderness of friendship, to have me either nearer you, or at least less distant, might have overlooked, in some degree, what was due on my part to the obligations of honour. But now, if I had any suspicions of that sort, they are all removed by the perusal of your letter of the twelfth; in which you shew yourself so kindly regardful of every thing that may fulfil my desires. I know, indeed, and knew also when I wrote the first letter, that if, at a former period, I was requested, and refused, it is now my turn to solicit; and that I cannot proceed to this unless I be firmly resolved. To no other person would I have expressed myself so irresolutely; but writing to your lordship, who is a part of my soul, and the dearer part, I have discoursed with you as the mind at times is accustomed to talk in soliloquy with itself; nor have I blushed to discover the flux and reflux of my thoughts, and that irresolution which has been, and which I dread will be, the ruin of all my actions.”*

* *Oper.* vol. X. p. 264.

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Fearful lest Tasso might take an improper step, and might for ever render implacable the Duke of Ferrara, his true friends, connected with that court, seem to have been anxious for his stay. “Yesterday (says he, in a letter to Scablbrino) I had a long epistle from the Duchess of Urbino, in which she offers to exert, in my favour, whatever influence she possesses with her brother. This I had not requested of her; and to-day Madam Leonora said, (without any thing leading to such a subject,) that hitherto her means have been very limited; but that now, her revenue being increased by the demise of her mother, she will give me some assistance. This I neither seek, nor will seek; nor shall I have recourse either to them or to the duke. If, indeed, they grant me any favour, however small, I shall not reject, but shall willingly receive it.” By all these circumstances Tasso was induced to prolong his stay at Ferrara; and it is the opinion of Serassi, that the Countess of Scandiano, whose “vermeil-tinctured lip” he had celebrated so highly, might be one of the principal causes of retardation. *

* *Vita del Tasso*, p. 222.

CHAP. XI.

Distress of Tasso at the objections of his Critics on their second and most severe revision—Apologetical letter to Antoniano—Its little effect—Tasso writes the Allegory of his Jerusalem—His motives—Suspects treachery at Ferrara—His rivalry with Guarini.

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CHAP. XI.

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WE have seen, in the course of the preceding chapter, that the irresolution and perplexity of Tasso, his disappointment and dissatisfaction with the world and with himself, were every day increasing. His journey to Rome, his stay at Florence, the tampering of the Medici, and the choice of critics who were in their interests, had rendered him suspected by Alphonso, to whom, without doubt, his enemies represented his imprudence as ingratitude. Desirous of leaving

Ferrara, Tasso saw that this could not be effected without the publication of his poem, and its dedication to the duke ; and, on the other hand, what but this work had he to offer to a new patron ? As to the poem itself, every letter of his revisors rendered him more dubious, or rather led him to despair of its success. At one time he was assailed with a metaphysical doubt, which overturned the whole structure of his *Jerusalem* ; at another time, passages, which were confessed to be beautiful, were represented as too delightful, as too seducing. He was counselled to remove from the holy conquest every thing relative to enchantment and to love ; and was threatened, on refusal, that he would not procure those privileges, without which he could not expect to obtain the most moderate profit from his work. To these, and other causes of mental distress, add a body exhausted and rendered sickly by intense mental labours, and the elements thus furnished cannot fail to prepare the physiologist for a very afflicting and terrible result.

During the winter and spring of this year, Tasso continued to be harrassed by these religious and metaphysical scruples ; and, whether from the novelty of his new office, or a temporary disgust, he seems for a short time to have abandoned his *Jerusalem*. “The poem,” says he, “sleeps, and I study history continually.” These infidelities, however, were never long, and he still returned with a mixture of love and anguish to his persecuted work. Of the revisors, by far the most scrupulous was Antoniano, who professed that he regarded it as a kind of impiety, that our poet should mingle

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Apologetical
letter to Anto-
niano.

magic and worldly passions in the description of a conquest, of which the motive was so holy. Tasso resolved to make an effort, if not to gain him over, at least to justify himself; and on the thirtieth of March, 1576, wrote Antoniano a long letter from Ferrara, of which the greater part is worthy of being translated. “ In your hints of both kinds, (writes he) I have most clearly known, venerable Sir! or rather have recognized your judgment, learning, religion, and piety. At the same time, I have perceived much benevolence towards me, much zeal for my reputation, and diligence in my affairs; since you have so fully accomplished all the offices of a Christian, a revisor, and a friend. As to what regards myself, I shall endeavour to act so as not to appear a person either unworthy of receiving your benefits, or ungrateful in acknowledging them. I am infinitely obliged by the fatigue you have taken for my satisfaction, and for the good of my poem; and the only benefit I now expect from you, is that you will afford me some occasion of serving you. With regard to your hints, I have accepted part, and shall diligently consider the others. I have accepted those which concern the changes of some words and verses, which might be ill interpreted, or might in the smallest degree offend the ears of the religious. With regard to things, I will remove from my poem not only some stanzas which have been judged licentious, but some part also of the enchantments and marvels; since neither the transmutation of knights into fishes shall remain, nor the miracle of the sepulchre, which is in truth too curious; nor the metamorphosis of the eagle,

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Act, 32.

nor that vision of Rinaldo, which is in the same canto, nor some other short passages which your reverence either condemns as an inquisitor, or does not approve as a poet. Among these I shall place the episode of Sophronia, at least the end of it, with which you are dissatisfied. It is true, that, with regard to the enchantments of the gardens of Armida, and those of the wood; with regard, too, to the loves of Armida and Erminia, of Rinaldo, Tancred, and the others, these I see not how I can remove without manifest ruin to the poem. And here I would request that your reverence would have regard not only to your reflexions on the nature of poetry and language, but that you would view also, with an indulgent eye, my condition and fortune; the manners of the country in which I live; and my hitherto natural inclinations. Besides, in the enchantments and marvels, there are few things which have not been furnished me by history; few circumstances, of which there are not at least some seeds which, planted in the fields of poetry, have produced those forests, which to some appear monstrous. The apparition of the blessed spirits, the tempest raised by demons, and the fountain which cures wounds, are things which have been entirely transplanted from history. The incantation of the machines, too, may be said to derive their origin from the relation of Procoldo, Count of Rochese, who tells us, that some magicians enchanted the machines of the believers; and we read in William of Tyre, a most noble historian, that these same magicians were slain by the Christians on the last day of the siege. But I leave it to your reverence to

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judge, whether it be lawful for a poet to aggrandize such circumstances, and whether it may not be of importance to religion, that some of them may be altered for the sake of interest. Nor was less occasion furnished me by the historians to expatiate on love, since it is written that Tancred, who was in other respects a knight of great goodness and valour, was nevertheless very incontinent, and extremely covetous of the embraces of the Saracen women. It is written, too, that Edward, an English baron, proceeded to this enterprise accompanied by his wife, who most tenderly loved him, and that they died there together; nor was she only, but many other noble ladies, during this and the other expeditions, in the army of the Christians. Let it not be taken amiss, if I here quote a passage from a letter, which is to be found in the ancient Tuscan prose, and is written by Friar Lewis Marsigli to Domicilla, a virgin. The words are these: "I say then, that the devil never heard a thing preached which gave him such content as this of the crusade, for thousands of very honourable ladies will become courtezans, and thousands of young people, who have at present the flower of their virginity, will lose it by the way." These are his words; and in another part of the letter, he clearly shews what many of the crusaders were, and with what kind of zeal they passed into Asia.* Now, to him who considers the nature of

Dissolute morals of many of the crusaders.

* "Toutes sortes de vices, (says Fleuri in speaking of the Christian army in one of the crusades,) y régnoient, et ceux que les pelerins avoient apportés de leurs pays, et ceux qu'ils avoient pris dans les pays étrangers." *Mœurs des Chrétiens*, p. 399. In fact, as

poetry, I believe it will be allowed, that I am at liberty to increase, ornament, and even add to these loves, since to augment, adorn, and feign, are the natural consequences and effects of poetry. This ought the rather to be granted me, as, if we give credit to historians, many of the princes were not only stained with incontinence, but debased by malice and cruelty; and if, instead of their injustice, rapine, fraud, and treason, I describe the far less heinous offences of love and anger, I judge that I do not render the memory of that enterprise less honourable and venerable, than it really was. I do not darken the memory of any one of them, in the manner that Virgil has blackened that of Dido; nor do I consider myself as obnoxious to any of the accusations, on account of which Homer is banished from the republic of Plato. Upon the whole, I believe that my poem will be read without any scandal by those who have perused the historians of those wars, who, however discordant in other respects, agree in this, that each of them describes many imperfections of the chiefs; nor is any one, but Godfrey alone, represented as uniformly good and pious. Nor could I paint them otherwise, not only because the poet ought to have much respect to the manners which Fame imputes, and, as it were, affixes to the individuals whom he describes; but because this variety of manners is as necessary as it is delightful in poetry.

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Act. 32.

all their spiritual debts were to be cancelled, many of the crusaders must have been of opinion, that it was for their interest that these should be as large as possible, and that, as they had unlimited credit with heaven, their draughts might be pretty large.

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A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.

This too, I may remark, that I have endeavoured to excuse every defect in the leaders with as much art as possible. Thus, I attribute the boasting and stubbornness of Raimondo to old age; though, in fact, they were vices of his nature; and by painting Tancred as young, I render excusable, by his tender years, those irregular desires, which maturity of age renders inexcusable. If in my poem I have mentioned one seditious person, and one renegado, many such are enumerated in the histories. But I have said enough upon this subject, and from these particulars, which perhaps you did not recollect, it will appear, that I am more excusable than I should be, had all the leaders been holy and virtuous.

Reflexions on
the Jerusalem.

“ As to the enchantments, which were also the subject of reprehension to your reverence, it may not be improper for me to add a few reasons, which lead me to think that they ought not (any more than love,) to be excluded from an epic work. In every heroic poem, there seems to be the utmost necessity for that marvellous, which exceeds human power and exertion, whether this be the effect of gods, as in the poems of the Gentiles, or of angels, devils, and magicians, as in the modern poetry. This difference of the marvellous does not appear to me essential, or such as to constitute a different species of poetry; but accidental and variable, according to the change of religion and manners. It is enough for me, that the *Odyssey* abounds as much as my poem, and even more, with those wonders which Horace calls *speciosa miracula*; and if it was allowed to Homer to follow the customs of his own, why may I not adopt those of my

times, at least in those circumstances in which custom gives laws? I do not indeed, as many, concede to custom full authority in poetry; yet I think that there are many things which may be considered as *sui juris*. Certainly there are laws in poetry which may be deemed essential, and fixed by nature, and by the reason of the thing; such as the precept of the unity of fable, and the like; yet, as there are things in which there is not, and cannot be, any certain rule, the poet ought in these to accommodate himself to fashion, and not too superstitiously to follow the ancients. * * * As to attributing too much to Rinaldo, which perhaps is the case, I have been induced to describe this second personage as of such importance, both in compliment to the family of Este, and from a wish to gratify the taste of the present age. For my part, I am exceedingly ambitious of popular applause, and would not be contented to write for the few, even were Plato of the number. now I knew not how otherwise to introduce into my poem that variety and delight, which many complain is wanting in the poetry of the ancients. * If Rinaldo be not

* This is true of all the ancient heroic poems, except the *Odyssey* of Homer. Virgil is supreme in the art of composition, and his *Æneid* contains many exquisite passages. It cannot be denied, however, that, as a whole, it is cold, and deficient in interest; its perusal is like a walk in a magnificent park, where every object is beautiful or stately, but where we soon become tired with the uniformity of the scenes. The perusal, on the other hand, of Tasso and Ariosto, is like a voyage amidst romantic lakes, rocks, forests, castles, and mountains; every change of place presents some new transformation, and the mind is kept continually busy with hope, wonder, and delight.

How anxious Torquato was to please persons of middling capacities and education, and how fearful lest he should sacrifice amusement to the correctness of his plan, appears

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Act. 32.

necessary to the enterprise, all those episodes would be superfluous in which he is spoken of; this difficulty, however, I hope to have overcome, as your reverence will see in the fourteenth canto, which I now send you. There, I hope, I have connected in such a manner, the necessity of Rinaldo with the superiority of Godfrey, that the action not only remains one, but there is an union even in the principle on which it depends. Godfrey is elect of God as captain, and necessary to the enterprise; and if he has need of Rinaldo, it is as the workman has need of the tool, or the heart of the hands; so that, from the necessity of Rinaldo, no imperfection can be argued in Godfrey, but what may be said of all captains, and of all mortal affairs, where instruments must be used. This union of two persons, necessary in different ways to an enterprise, is besides not so new, but that there are examples of it in antiquity. Thus, in the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles, when Neoptelomus wonders that Philoctetes should be sought as necessary for the capture of Troy, when he himself was the fatal hero, upon whom that event depended; the answer of Ulysses is, "ye are both necessary, the one could not take Troy without the assistance of the other." Perhaps this introduction of two fatal and necessary persons is planned by myself in a still more proper manner; since there is between Godfrey and Rinaldo a certain order of depen-

from many passages of his letters. *Opere*, vol. X. pp. 252, 253, 306. "I never doubted," says he, "that I should be able to satisfy those who are versed in poetical studies, and my fear is only concerning the others."

dence, which does not exist between Pyrrhus and Philoctetes. Moreover, Quintus Calaber, a Greek poet and an ancient, (two circumstances which, though every other qualification be wanting, are sufficient to confer much authority,) Quintus, I say, has, in imitation of Sophocles, brought Philoctetes from the island of Lemnos; and I see not, therefore, why I may not be permitted to recal Rinaldo from the Canaries." *

These latter remarks are designed to meet the objections of Sperone, about the unity of heroes, which, as I have mentioned, seem to have given Tasso uncommon vexation, as bearing not against particular passages, but against the whole plan of his poem. Our poet was so impatient to publish, that, even at the beginning of the revision, every month had appeared to him like a thousand years; † and now, after more than twelve months, the day of publication seemed more remote than ever. From the beginning, Tasso had expressed his fears, that, owing to the strictness of the then Roman court, he would find much difficulty in obtaining a privilege for his poem; ‡ and his fears seemed now to be completely justified. His letter to Antoniano produced no effect, as we learn from the following epistle to Scipio Gonzaga, dated at Modena, on the twenty-fourth of April, 1576.

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 147.

† M'è paruto mill' anni, ch'essi abbiano la metà del Poema. *Oper.* vol. X. p. 101.

‡ *Oper.* vol. X. pp. 101, 102, 122, &c.

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A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.Ill success of
Tasso's apolo-
getical letter.

“ From a letter written to me by . . . , * I have collected, that my long discourse to him has produced no other fruit but to make him esteem me learned, a circumstance about which I am perfectly indifferent. But what I really wished has not succeeded, since he declares that he firmly persists in his former opinions, and that all he has said hath been for conscience sake. I am certain that I could procure an impression of my poem in Venice, and in every other place of Lombardy, with a licence from the inquisitor ; and that, too, without any change, or a change at least of only a few words. But I am terrified at the example of Sigonius, whose book was suspended, though printed with a licence from an inquisitor. I am terrified by another example of Muzio, which was told me by Borghesi ; I am terrified at the severity of [Antoniano,] as I suppose that there are many in Rome like him. I fear also some ill office of , † who clearly shows himself malignant and ungrateful, for certainly I have

* In the original the name is left blank ; but, from the date, the context, and the subject, it is not to be doubted that Antoniano is the person meant. Serassi is exceedingly confused and imperfect on the subject of the revisions of the *Jerusalem*, which he blends together, while he suppresses the documents which might enable the reader to form a clear idea of the matter. In the work of Tasso, the letters which relate to the revisions are ill arranged, and often falsely dated, those which relate to the first being mingled with such as refer to the second. It has been necessary for me repeatedly to peruse these letters with great care, to observe the concatenation, sometimes to correct the dates, and to arrange the whole. See Appendix, (No. XVII.)

† Sperone, as appears from what is subjoined. Forcellini, in his life of Sperone, p. 39, says, “ L'Ottobre dell' anno mentovato, (1571,) il Duca di Ferrara Alfonso II. mandò quattro de' più illustri suoi Gentiluomini a levarlo da Padova, e seco il volle alla corte, il che fu tuttavia pochi giorni. E l'anno dietro cercando d'averlo seco, come il passato, mandò a lui il Pronotario Ariosto.”

lately performed for him some offices which I would not have done for myself; and, in the first place, I have always loved, honoured, and celebrated him. Such is the world! He is desirous, (as has been reported to me by a person who conversed with him after my departure from Rome,) he is desirous to unite the cause of his dialogues and of my poem; and, from the letter of the *Poctino*,* I have clearly discovered that [Sperone] has spoken with him at length on my subject.† It was I who formerly made [Sperone] known to the duke, and through my means, chiefly, the duke entertained such an opinion of him, that he would have admitted him into his service on the most honourable terms. At that time, however, he made no account of them; and now, because the duke does not renew his offers, I have lost his friendship; at least this is the only reason I can devise. This I know well, that I have lately spoken of him, both to the Duke of Ferrara and the Duchess of Urbino, in the most honourable manner, and in such a way as was as advantageous to the result of some of his designs, as disadvantageous to the sum of my own. But enough of this insatiable man! •

“ I now return to my suspicions and their remedies. I know that I have committed an error in having shown at all

* This name had in his youth been given to Antoniano, on account of his talents as an Improvisatore. See Tiraboschi *Storia della Let. Ital.* tom. VII. p. iii. p. 192.

† On referring to Tasso's letter to Antoniano, it will be seen, that he offers some remarks towards its conclusion, (p. 268) for the purpose of meeting the objections of Sperone about the unity of a hero. These objections, Tasso here appears to think had been communicated by Sperone to Antoniano, for the purpose of afflicting him.

CHAP. XI.

A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.Tasso is com-
pelled to mutilate his poem.

my poem at Rome ; but since this is done, and cannot be recalled, I beseech your lordship, at least to suppress as much as possible its reputation, good or bad ; to shun every occasion of shewing or speaking of it, and (should you read it to any one) not to read an amorous part. Besides, I desire infinitely, that you will not signify by a word, nor even by a sign, to any person whatever, (nor do I except even M. Luca) this my suspicion ; and I beseech you to guard it equally from domestics as from strangers. Above all, persuade [Antoniano] that, although with the licence of the inquisitors, I might publish many of the passages he has censured, yet, that I will, in a great degree, satisfy not merely my own, but his conscience. And certainly my design is to expunge or change, if not as much as at present may be promised to him, at least much more than shall be enjoined by the inquisitors, nor shall I leave a single word or verse of those which give him most offence. I shall accommodate to his taste the invention of the natural magician ; I shall remove from the fourth and from the sixteenth cantos those stanzas which to him seem licentious, but which are by far the most beautiful. In order, however, that they may not be lost entirely, I will cause a various impression of these two cantos to be made, and will give them entire to ten or fifteen of my most intimate friends. To the world (such is the necessity of the times,) my poem must appear mutilated . . . but of this say not a word. Flamminio has noticed a thing as artfully managed in my poem ; I mean, that there is no love in it of which the event is happy, and this is really the

case. Surely this might produce toleration for these descriptions; and, as the love of Erminia seems in a certain degree to have a happy consequence, I shall remedy this also, and make her not only a Christian, but a religious nun. I know that I cannot speak of her more than I have done already, without some prejudice to art; but I care not though I displease in some measure the intelligent, provided I can satisfy in any way the scrupulous. I will therefore add to the penultimate canto ten stanzas, in which this conversion shall be contained. Your lordship may impart this thought of mine to M. Silvio, [Antoniano,] and to M. Flaminio; but speak not of it to the others, as they would laugh at it, and in the mean time I shall devise in what manner it may be executed. I must not neglect informing you, that, in the letter written to me by [Antoniano,] the following very words are contained: "It grieves me that my nature or my vocation has made me in some degree too rigorous, and I pray you to pardon me, the rather as I have already in a certain measure been punished for it. For some time past the countenance of one, whom I highly revere and love, has shewn itself to me, not indeed disturbed, but less serene than usual." I conceive that he alludes to your lordship, and if it be so, I beseech you to dissemble, and, both for your own and my sake, to testify the highest satisfaction. I also will write to him, and endeavour to appear entirely satisfied. I recollect, that, in my last letter to your lordship, I expressed a doubt that the opening of the waters would not please those who

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A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.

are ambitious of attaining grandeur by every method. * Be assured that, when I wrote that passage, I had not yet received the letter in which you seem to disapprove of this marvel, and that my words did not relate to you in any way. I know that by other means, and by modes more worthy of you, your lordship aspires to the high dignities which your worth deserves. I will not conceal from you another particular which is in the letter of the *Poetino*. It is this, that “ he would desire my poem should be read, not so much by gentlemen, as by monks and nuns.” But I have said enough of this matter ; and I beseech you to write me your sentiments freely on the subject. . . . Nothing farther remains for me to say, except, that, as I expect to be in Ferrara

* Tasso here alludes to a letter written to Scipio Gonzaga from Modena, fourteenth April, 1576, ten days prior to the epistle, a translation of which I am introducing above into the text. “ I wrote,” says he, (in this letter of the 14th of April,) “ that, if the word *magico* [magician] give offence to those gentlemen, I would remove it from those few places where it occurs, and write the word *saggio* [sage] in its stead. Moreover, I say, that if that rod, and that *opening of the waters* (*Ger. Lib. can. XIV. st. 36.*) is a subject of scandal to any one who wishes to become a bishop or a cardinal, I shall content myself with causing them to enter the earth by a cave, without any of the marvels. I have already removed the miracle of the buried person, the metamorphosis of the knights into fishes, and the wonderful ship ; I have moderated greatly the wantonness of the last stanzas of the twentieth canto, although they were seen by the inquisitor, and tolerated, nay almost extolled. I shall remove the strange events of the eighteenth canto ; I shall take away the stanzas of the parrot ; those of the kisses ; and some of the rest, in this and the other cantos, which give most offence to Antoniano, besides a vast number of verses and words. And all this I have done, or shall do, not from the doubt that I should have any difficulty in Venice, but only because I fear that some impediments may arise in Rome.” *Oper.* vol. X. p. 140 Is it in the least degree wonderful, that the reason of Tasso, (strong and vigorous as it had been) sunk and was overwhelmed ?

in the course of less than fifteen days, your lordship may direct your answer to that city." *

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A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.

It appears from this, and from other letters of Tasso to Gonzaga, that his opinion was, that the scruples of his revisors, (particularly of Antoniano,) were not altogether conscientious ones. Several circumstances, and, amongst others, the sternness of their decisions, render this probable; for there is this difference between a real and affected sentiment, that the latter is always more exaggerated than the other; and, as if fearful of betraying itself, always more unrelenting. The number of those, however, who convert passion into piety, by declaiming against writings, which can be tortured into a subject of scandal, will be always numerous. Not only is this the most certain and public way of establishing a reputation of sanctity, but, so far from requiring the sacrifice of any passion, gratifies those of envy, malevolence, and detraction. The same court, from which Tasso could not obtain a toleration for the word *mago*, had, three years before, rejoiced exceedingly, and even, it is said, struck a medal in commemoration of the massacre of St Bartholomew. Facts of this kind have furnished the enemies of mankind with their most offensive weapons; and Religion, which, during so many ages of barbarity, had, with her attendant Charity, fled away to heaven, has been charged with all the crimes and follies of Bigotry and Persecution, the most bitter of her foes.

The scruples of
Tasso's revisors
probably not
conscientious
ones.

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A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.

It is fortunate, perhaps, for the reputation of Tasso, that, owing to the calamities by which he was assailed, no opportunity was given him of publishing his poem, (with the sanction of his name,) in a mutilated state. Those passages which, in deference to Antoniano, he intended to cancel, were in truth the most beautiful; and I shall oppose, on this head, the authority of an English to that of an Italian prelate. “ I maintain (says Dr Hurd) that the faery tales of Tasso do him more honour than what are called the more natural, that is, the classical parts of his poem. His imitations of the ancients have indeed their merit; for he was a genius in every thing. But they are faint, and cold, and almost insipid, when compared with his original fictions. We make a shift to run over the passages he has copied from Virgil. We are all on fire amidst the magical feats of Ismen, and the enchantments of Armida.

Magnanima mensogna, hor quando è il vero
Sì bello, che si possa à te preporre?

I speak at least for myself; and must freely own, if it were not for these lies of Gothic invention, I should scarcely be disposed to give the *Gerusalemme Liberata* a second reading” * In this unqualified commendation, there is no hint of impurity in Tasso; and though, as in Milton, voluptuous passages may be found in his work, yet (taking our estimate from the poems of these two distinguished bards upon the

* *Remarks on the Faerie Queene of Spenser.*

whole) they are chaste, and moral, and holy writers. With regard to the resolution expressed in the above letter, of rendering the lovers unfortunate, I believe that, by readers of the *Jerusalem* in general, there is a dissatisfaction felt at the darkness of the fate of Erminia and of Armida; and that a wish is formed that they had been described as finding at last, in virtuous and happy love, the recompense of so many sufferings and tears.

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A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.Tasso resolves
to allegorize
his poem.

Towards the conclusion of the first revision, Tasso, aware of the obloquy to which his poem might be exposed, had formed the idea of covering its less modest beauties with the veil of allegory. During many ages, and upon all occasions, a mantle of this kind had been resorted to, whenever the progress of taste or reason had rendered the naked reality absurd or scandalous. This was particularly practised by some admirers of Homer, who, in order to shield that poet from the strong objections which many of the Pagans themselves made to his unseemly representations of the gods, asserted that a continued allegory or mystic sense lies concealed under the letter, or obvious import of his works. Several of the Italian poets and commentators availed themselves of this easy method of defence,* and nothing can be more

* Berni, in his beautiful prefaces to the cantos of Boiardo, frequently asserts that his stories are allegorical, (canto XXXIV. st. 2. &c.) The following fine stanza is the first of the XXV. canto of that poem.

Questi draghi fatati, quest' incanti,
Questi giardini, e libri, e corni, e cani,

CHAP. XL.

A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.

ludicrous than the moral and religious inferences which are attempted to be deduced from their comic and sometimes even licentious tales. The poem of Tasso is neither comic nor licentious ; but, as so many parts of it had been objected to by the expectants of the Roman court, he had resolved to have recourse to the usual plea ; and in June this year, formed the allegory of his poem. It has been alledged, even by the great Milton, that the tales of enchantment and of chivalry are not devoid of a hidden and mysterious meaning ;* but Tasso, by whom this pretension is most openly made, confesses that, with regard to himself, he had never thought of an allegory in the formation of the plan, and while composing his poem. “ Weary (says he in a letter to Scalabrino,) weary of poetry, I have turned myself to philosophy, and have executed minutely the allegory not of a part, but of the whole of my poem. You will laugh at this new caprice. I know not what will be the opinion on this

Ed uomini salvatichi, e giganti,
E fiere, e mostri ch'anno visi humani,
Son fatti per dar pasto a gl'ignoranti;
Ma voi ch'avete gl'intelletti sani,
Mirate la dottrina che s'asconde
Sotto queste coperte alte, e profonde.

* And if aught else great bards beside,
In sage, and solemn tunes, have sung
Of turnies, and of trophies hung :
Of forests and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.

Il Penseroso, v. 116.

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A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.

subject of the Signor [Gonzaga,] and of the other learned Romans; and, in truth, I have written it for no other reason than to give food to the times. I will act the profound, and shew that I have had a deep political purpose, and under this shield I shall endeavour to protect the loves and enchantments. But really, either love deceives me, or all the parts of the allegory are so connected with each other, and correspond so admirably, both with the literal sense of the poem, and with my poetical principles, that nothing could do it more; and I even doubt whether, from the beginning, I have not had it in view. * * Tell the Signor that I have performed this labour, which, in truth, has been only the labour of a day; and that I will send it, without fail, by the next post." It was sent, in fact, on the fifteenth of June, and the epistle which accompanied it shall be given in the Appendix.*

The poetical letters of Tasso unfortunately close on the fifteenth of July this year; at which period he had defaced, or was defacing, to please his revisors, the most beautiful passages of his poem. Among these was the affecting episode of Olindo and Sophronia, which, we have seen, he was once so anxious to retain. "I have now," says he, in a letter to Scipio Gonzaga, (written April third, 1576,) "I have now condemned to death, by an irrevocable sentence, the episode of Sophronia. This happened partly because it

Mutilates his
Jerusalem.

* See Appendix, (No. XVIII.)

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Act. 32.

was in truth too lyric, partly because it appeared unconnected, and too soon introduced, to Sig. Barga and the others, to whose united judgment I shall not oppose myself. My principal reason, however, has been, that I may give as little employment as possible to the friars of the inquisition." * Various expedients are then proposed by Tasso, for the purpose of filling up so large a breach ; and it appears, that he considered himself as driven to the necessity of altering the whole structure of his poem. In a letter (of the fourteenth of June) to Gonzaga, when giving him an account of some changes he had made, Tasso writes thus : " No alteration remains to be made on this canto, except in some things censured by M. Silvio [Antoniano ;] particularly that stanza must be changed, where it seems to him that I attribute too much power to love over the liberty of the will. It is true, that I am anxious that he should grant a pardon, and would reprieve from death these two verses :

Gode Amor, ch' è presente.

As, for my part, I cannot see what scandal they can give." † This certainly was great blindness in the poet ; as in these very profane verses, (having described Erminia as clothing herself with armour, for the purpose of disguising her departure from the city to visit her beloved Tancred,) he had said,

in a most heathenish manner, “ Love, who is present, smiles inwardly, as when he induced Alcides to invest himself with a female dress.”

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A. D. 1576.
Act. 32.

Gode Amor, ch' e presente, e tra se ride,
Come all' hor già, ch'avvolse in gonna Alcide. *

To the departure of Erminia † different objections were made by the revisors, who seem to have equally vexed their victim by their severity and by their languor. This Tasso attributed, in a considerable degree, to the malice of Sperone, as appears from the following letter to Luca Scalabrino: “ Why, (says he,) do you not write, and send or tell me if you mean to send my cantos? What means this delay, and your silence concerning it? Why did you begin what you do not mean to end; and what was the prate of Sperone? If he wishes to hear my five last cantos, read them to him; but, indeed, I desire rather that he would not hear them. At all events, there will be a rupture between us soon or late, and the rupture will be the greater the longer it is delayed. I wish for no master nor governor, unless I eat his bread; and am determined to be free, not only in my opinions, but in my writings and actions. What a wretch am I! every one wishes to be my tyrant; nor do I refuse counsellors, provided they would content themselves with being merely such. There is another thing which I want to know,—why did you not shew

* *Ger. Lib.* cant. VI. st. 92.† *Ibid.* cant. VI. st. 89.

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him my sonnets at my entreaty? Had I governed myself with him, according to my own judgment, it had been well, as I knew him better than did any other; but since I have proceeded so far, let there be this indulgence. Shew, I say, that all I have written to you has been done with the design it should be imparted to him; and, above all, entreat him that he would think on the doubts which I have intimated about the departure of Erminia.”*

Treachery
which Tasso
meets with at
Ferrara,

Torquato seems not to have been in the most placid frame of mind when he wrote this letter; and the reader will not wonder at it, when he learns, that, in addition to the attacks he received from Rome, he discovered at Ferrara a hundred proofs of treachery. *Mi son chiarito*, says he, *di cento tradimenti, che m'avea orditi Brunello*. What sort of personage Brunello was, the reader of Ariosto well knows, and Torquato seems to have given this as a *nom de guerre* to one of his antagonists. One of the feats of this gentleman, we have an account of in the following letter. It is addressed to Scipio Gonzaga, and begins with giving an account of the treachery of another friend, a critical Jew, who did not admire, or rather who calumniated, Tasso's poem and himself. “The friend,” says he, “whom I of old suspected, and whose letter I sent to your lordship some months ago, † is, without doubt, treacherous; and I have discovered it clearly, very clearly, by a subtile investigation. Now let M.

* Serassi, *Vita del Tasso*, p. 228.

† See p. 255.

Luca [Scalabrino,] say that I am too suspicious. But, talking of suspicion, I cannot here pass over one of the exploits of Brunello. Always when I went out, he asked the key of my chambers, for the purpose, as he said, of some intrigue; and I granted it to him, taking care, at the same time, to have the closet locked where I held my books and writings. In this latter there was a small chest, in which, besides other compositions, I preserved a great part of the letters of your lordship and of M. Luca, especially those which contained any poetical reflection. Talking afterwards with him and some others, I observed that they made to my poem, which they had not seen, some of the objections used by Sig. Barga; and the suspicion which this awakened was confirmed by my knowledge of the men, and of their incapacity to make such remarks. I now began an investigation, and learned, at length, from a servant of Count Lewis Montesucoli, my neighbour, that last Lent, while I was at Modena, he saw Brunello enter, in the night-time, into my chambers, accompanied by a locksmith. By using diligence, I have found this locksmith, and he confesses that he had been at court to open a chamber, of which, he said, his conductor had lost the key. Your lordship may conceive the rest. This is one of his tricks; but there are many others fully as clever. Some, indeed, I believe of greater importance, but, as yet, I have not been able to assure myself.*

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At the conclusion of the epistle, Tasso consoles himself that he had destroyed all those letters of Gonzaga and Scalabrino, in which any freedom was used, except on the subject of Sperone. The opening of the closet, one would think, and the curiosity of Brunello, were more likely to have proceeded from the hope of finding letters of love or business than criticisms, which every one imagines he can make as well as another. It was by criticism, however, that our poet was principally suffering, and every other consideration seemed, at present, of subordinate importance.

Serassi here (though he disguises altogether the deeper wounds which our poet received from Rome,) enumerates several obscure persons whom he supposes to have persecuted Torquato, and who are now little more interesting than the gnats by which he was tormented on a summer's eve. I know not that we ought to particularize those persons who are remarkable only by the injuries they have done to genius, since there are many who would find a pleasure even in being damned to everlasting fame, and prefer an immortality of censure to an irreproachable oblivion. That the adversaries of a man of genius, however, are ever mentioned, is almost in every instance owing wholly to himself; and he has himself to blame, if he gives lasting importance to persons who, but for his complaints, would have been neglected in their own age, and forgotten by posterity. Nobody would ever have heard of Bavius and Maeuius, if Virgil, wishing to avenge himself, had not im-

mortalized them. The proper security against envy is neglect; this is the magic rod which paralyses its attacks; and it will retire innocuous to its den, if you neither seem to fear it, nor attempt to wound it.

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Leonora at this time, perhaps to withdraw his mind from the cares which perplexed it, invited Torquato to spend some time with her at Consandoli, a delicious country residence on the Po, about eighteen miles from Ferrara. It was an ancient palace, built by the Princes of Este, and surrounded by a country remarkable for its beauty. His stay there was only eleven days in duration; but the spectacle of grand and of ornamented nature would refresh the organs of thought, and recal the ideas which anxiety and fatigue had interrupted. The house where our poet chiefly visited at Ferrara, was that of the Countess of Sala; and his principal attraction there seems to have been her rose lipped step-daughter, Eleonora, Countess of Scandiano. Torquato, as we have seen, sometimes celebrated the majestic beauties of the mother; but the canzoni written of, and the sonnets and madrigals addressed to the young countess, have all the ardour and pathetic eloquence of love. In the writings of the epic poets we may, perhaps, trace, without difficulty, their peculiar inclinations or affections. The wandering and uncertain life of Homer seems to be sufficiently attested by his warm praises of hospitality, and by the relish with which he speaks of good cheer and abundance of wine. The philosophical disposition of Virgil is manifest from several pas-

Visits Consan-
doli.

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sages in his work, where he shews it, as in the song at the banquet of Dido, even in violation of that excellent taste which he possessed. With what rapture and extatic emotion does the divine Milton speak of music, in passages worthy of that heaven which he pourtrays ! Love, burning and devouring love, kindled the heart and the fancy of Torquato ; and no other poet has painted, in a manner so interesting, the most ardent of its enjoyments, and the most poignant of its sufferings.

Quarrels with
Guarini,

The praises of a writer so illustrious as Tasso, could not be indifferent to a woman of taste and feeling. As his virtues were equal to his talents, he was distinguished, in a very flattering manner, by the two countesses, as, it would appear, he continued to be by the Princesses of Este. This circumstance increased that jealousy and envy of which he was the object ; and, amongst others, Battista Guarini, who had formerly been his intimate friend, was become his enemy. To this poet, as we have seen, Tasso had left, with some other friends, the review of his manuscripts when he departed to France ; a strong proof of the intimacy which subsisted between them. Literary contention had interrupted the cordiality of their union, and to this, as appears from two sonnets published by Serassi, was added the jealousy of love. Tasso seems to have begun the attack ; and, in a sonnet in which he assaults his rival, wonders that complaints of love so pathetic could be uttered by a person without fidelity or feeling. The answer of Guarini is in

rhymes of the same kind with those of his opponent; a common practice of that poet, who seems to have been fond of this, and of what may be termed the *bouts rimés* kind of writing; I mean, of adopting the ending words of another's composition as his own. Of this there is a famous instance in the fourth chorus of the *Pastor Fido*, where, making choice of the rhymes and order of the first chorus of the *Aminta*, he endeavours to rival the most beautiful lyric production of Tasso. To return, however, to the sonnet, Guarini retorts the accusation, and seems to accuse his adversary, not only of vain boasting, but of seeking favour by false declarations of attachment.

Di due fiamme si vanta, e stringe, e spezza
Più volte un nodo; e con quest' arti piega
(Chi'l crederebbe !) a suo favore i dei.

Two flames he boasts, but oft he bursts, and binds
Affection's chords; yet to the love of gods
(Ah ! who would think it) by his arts he winds. *

Whether or not Tasso occasionally feigned tenderness for the sake of patronage, I know not ; but it seems to be too certain, that he experienced all the ardour, and, from the nature of his situation, all the bitterness of love. He was now approaching an age when (if it at all seizes the heart,)

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this passion is very terrible. It seems that one is on the brink of for ever losing the privilege of being ardently beloved ; that he is for ever leaving the region of beauty, of sentiment, and illusion. The soul of sensibility shudders at the desolation before it ; and, ere it is driven from the Eden, makes an almost convulsive effort to attach itself to some beautiful associate, who may attend it through the wilderness, and (more than beguile) may imparadise the way. Among the complex causes which led to the mental alienation of Tasso, though his poem was the principal, love appears, or at least may be suspected, to have been one of the accessaries. I am fond of illustrating the poetical sentiments of Tasso by those of Milton and other great poets, and of comparing the circumstances of his situation with those whose condition was similar to his own. “ Nature,” says Mr Hayley, (in speaking of Cowper,) “ had given him a warm constitution ; and, had he been prosperous in early love, it is probable that he might have enjoyed a more uniform and happy tenor of health. But a disappointment of the heart, arising from the cruelty of fortune, threw a cloud on his juvenile spirit. Thwarted in love, the natural fire of his temperament turned impetuously into the kindred channel of devotion. The smothered flames of desire, uniting with the vapours of constitutional melancholy and the fervency of religious zeal, produced altogether that irregularity of corporeal sensation, and of mental health, which gave such extraordinary vicissitudes of splendour and of darkness to his

mortal career, and made him at times an idol of the purest admiration, and at times an object of the sincerest pity.” *

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* Vol. IV. p. 191. 8°. The mental derangement of Tasso has generally been attributed to love, a hypothesis of which I shall examine the truth in the sequel. Mean while, it deserves to be stated, that it has been remarked by an able physiologist, that disappointed and unsuccessful love is less frequently the cause than the precursor of insanity. “One circumstance,” says he, “which has evidently tended to give birth to the opinion, that love is a common cause of madness, is, that, when insanity is about to break forth, both the exalted state of the imagination, and the increased sensibility of the body, dispose to this passion; and it frequently happens, that the very first symptom by which this disease shews itself, is the person’s fancying himself to be violently in love. As such a passion is more frequently unreasonable in regard to its object, than reasonable, so it naturally is opposed, or not attended to; and the refusal, or disappointment, if it can be so called, produces a paroxysm of mania.”—*Crichton on Mental Derangement*, vol. II. p. 320.

What this writer says of love, may also be true of superstition; which, though it often accompanies derangement, is, perhaps, a concomitant rather than a cause.

CHAPTER XII.

Tasso quarrels with one of his former friends, who endeavours to assassinate him.—His anxiety on account of a threatened surreptitious edition of his poem.—Exertions of the Duke of Ferrara to prevent this.—Our poet visits Modena, where his mental distress increases.—Writes to the Marquis of Monte to procure him a faithful domestic.—Reflexions.—Tasso believes he is accused of heresy.—Is seized with mental derangement.—Writes to the Cardinals of the Inquisition, and to the Duke of Ferrara.

A. D. 1576 — 1577.

ÆT. 32 — 33.

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A. D. 1576.
Æt. 32.

THE writer of the life of Tasso has reason to regret that minute enquiry is extremely hostile to romance ; and that, to a numerous class of readers, a curious fiction is much more pleasing than the sober truth. The keen investigation of Serassi has dissipated a number of the agreeable illusions which had been raised by Manso ; and we are surprised and

disappointed to find, that the life of so romantic a poet has not been so romantic as we have been led to suppose. Such a disappointment will generally happen when we examine with attention the incidents of life, and substitute research for that general and fictitious idea which the writings of an author, and perhaps some short and defective biography, impress upon our minds. Thus, we cannot help supposing that Petrarch was generally sitting with Laura, or lamenting her absence by the fountain of Valchiuse; nor do we learn without feelings of dissatisfaction, that he was a busy, an active, and laborious man, who seems to have been occupied with love only while writing his sonnets; and that Laura was a little sickly woman, with whom, it is probable, he never enjoyed a solitary walk, or a pleasing conversation, in the course of his life.

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We are now, however, arrived at an adventure in the life of Tasso, which, though not quite so splendid as painted by the Marquis of Villa, appears to bear honourable testimony to his prowess. One of those friends of our poet, of whom he was at this time so suspicious, had seemed to him to give proofs of peculiar treachery and malignity. Meeting this person one day in the court of the palace, he remonstrated with him in so mild a manner, that, far from producing an apology, it encouraged him to give Tasso the lie. This was requited, as it deserved, by a blow on the face, which the other received very meekly; soon afterward, however, having collected his brothers, the whole clan being armed, went in pursuit of our bard, and finding him in the

Tasso quarrels
with one of his
friends.

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piazza, they attacked him unawares, from behind, with great fury. Immediately he turned round, and drawing his sword, they, as might have been expected from their behaviour, escaped as quickly as possible. The principal champion repaired to the house of Hercules Cortile, ambassador of Alphonso at the court of Florence; the others took refuge in different places.

These different circumstances appear partly from a letter of Tasso, in the Albani library, a fragment of which Serassi has for the first time published.* It is dated the tenth of October, 1576, and is as follows: “ My absence from Ferrara, and my disquietudes, have been the causes that I have not hitherto answered your three letters, one of which was a very long one, and invited me to a long discussion. In reply, and beginning with the last, as being that which most immediately concerns me, I assure you that I involuntarily engaged in this strife, not from any impulse of anger or inconsiderate impetuosity, but compelled by my honour, and provoked by the lie, most insolently given me, and most impertinently repeated. And as it was against my will that I was engaged

* *Vita del Tasso*, p. 236. I must here, by the way, remark, that we are not to give implicit confidence to Tasso's account of the treachery of his former friends at Ferrara, at least in all its extent, since part may, perhaps, be considered as symptoms preceding his disease. The patient, says Pinel, (when describing the approach of mental derangement,) is very restless, and is disturbed by vain fears and groundless apprehensions. A remarkable change takes place in his moral feelings; he expresses an excessive aversion for particular persons, and very frequently for those whom he before esteemed and loved most.

in it, so I shall, with all my power, endeavour to extricate myself as soon as possible; but to extricate myself, however, with due honour and satisfaction. For although as yet I be superior to my adversary, not only in the justice of my cause, but in what has passed between us, (I having struck him as an honourable man, and he me as a traitor,) although he added to his treason the baseness of a sudden flight, so that, when the circumstances were known, I might, without farther proceeding, (were he my equal,) come to an agreement; although there is between his person and mine much inequality of blood, and, I may add, of every quality, I am willing to put myself on equal terms with him, that it may appear to the world how much he is my inferior in all respects. And this he should have been taught ere now, had not other regards than those due to him and to his brothers, restrained me, nor should he have gone about vaunting that he had, &c. But as this quarrel of mine is complicated with a thousand other secret plots, I shall restrain my fury. I marvel not that he dares to shew the case in writing, since, from a wretch so infamous, what may not be expected? But were not such his character, I well might wonder. For both the blow I gave him, and his base attempt to assassinate me, took not place by night, nor in a desert, but both of them happened at mid-day, in the court, and on the piazza; and it is known to all Ferrara, that when I struck him I was alone, and without arms; and that he did nothing which testified a resolution to resent it. Afterward, however, he came, accompanied by many, to assault me from be-

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hind, and fled almost before he touched me. These circumstances are here well-known, and shall soon, I trust, be manifested to all Italy, since he will be proceeded against in the manner that he deserves. It was no lie, sir, that he told, when he informed you, that he had seen a mountain of your letters; for, besides some that I had shewed him, he has, with much industry, endeavoured to procure a sight of the others, having caused a false key to be made for the little chest where I hold my writings. But I have said enough of this infamous wretch, to whom the shelter which has been afforded by Sig. Cortile will not, I am persuaded, be very satisfactory to the duke."

From this letter, it is obvious, that our poet's enemy was not, as Manso seems to think, a personage of importance; "there being," says Tasso, "between his person and mine much inequality of blood;" that the defiance was not formally given and accepted; and that, lastly, our poet was not put under arrest on the pretext of preserving him from the ambush of his foes. Manso attributes to this confinement the beginning of the malady of Tasso; and he hints, that the treachery of this friend was the betraying some secrets of love relative to Leonora of Este. That this supposition is extremely dubious, or rather quite unfounded, appears from a passage of a letter, written at this period, and addressed to Scipio Gonzaga. "I have been all these days in my chamber, except two visits I have made, one to the duchess, and another to Madam Leonora; and as nothing more seemed to be said of my business, I began

to imagine, that it was lulled asleep. Yesterday, however, I was invited, in name of his highness, to attend him to Loreto, where he is to proceed to-day, with very few attendants. This morning, too, Crispo, secret~~ly~~ counsellor of his highness, and supreme in matters of justice, made me be called, and mentioned some honourable and affectionate words which had been publicly spoken by the duke, in demonstration of the love he bears, and the esteem he has for me; words which have been confirmed by many others. He added, that I ought not to wonder if my affair has proceeded slowly, since this has been done intentionally, with the hope of more easily apprehending the culprits; but that, now that he knows that they are without the state, he has a commission from the duke to proceed against them with the utmost rigour; of this commission I am certain, and have believed the rest." *

In both the letters in which our bard gives an account of the treachery of his friend, he mentions that person's having opened, with false keys, the chest in which he kept his papers; and probably this alone, and the discovery of his literary secrets, was the cause of his anger. What evidently preyed on the mind of Tasso, was the objections to his poem; his brain was heated with the fatigue of reviewing and altering it,

* *Oper.* vol. IX. p. 409. It is the opinion of Serassi, that Tasso's false friend was one Maddalò, (p. 239;) and he tells us, that, with all the diligence he had used, he could not discover who he was: We are informed, however, by Tiraboschi, (*Storia*, &c. vol. III. p. 235, Ed. Mathias,) that he was a notary in Ferrara, employed by the court.

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and his heart was deluged with anguish, lest it should either not appear at all, or appear mutilated and imperfect. Love is a very powerful passion, but it easily yields to ambition and the thirst of glory ; even in the burning temperament of Tasso, it must have had only a secondary influence ; and if it occupied him at present, in his uttermost distress, this was a symptom rather of feelings, rendered morbid by other causes, than of its own ascendancy. No human mind seems ever to have glowed with a more intense flame of literary ambition than that of Tasso ; and what must have been the explosion, when its blaze was subdued, and its vehemence quenched, by the bitter waters of censure and neglect !

Is threatened
with a surrep-
titious edition
of his poem.

Soon afterward, as misfortunes seem to be gregarious, our poet was afflicted with the intelligence, that his *Jerusalem* was printing in different cities of Italy. This, indeed, was to have been expected from the imprudent conduct of the author ; but the event was not less afflicting on this account. It assailed him on two points, where wounds are the most acute ; the desire of glory, and the hope of gain. His poem, he had been led to believe, was still very imperfect ; and it was not probable, that the surreptitious copies would be much improved. He had imagined, too, as we have seen, that the sum he might receive for his work would form the basis of that independence, which is the principal support of happiness ; and, accordingly, he entreated the duke, that he would employ his utmost endeavours to prevent so great an injury. Alphonso accordingly wrote to different princes

and governments in behalf of Torquato; and, in order to shew his warmth on this point, I shall adduce a letter of the twenty-second of November, 1576, addressed to Octavius Farnese, Duke of Parma.

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Act. 52.

“ Most illustrious and most excellent Lord,

“ Tasso, my servant, informs me, that he has been advised, that some persons are printing, without his permission, a poem which he has composed in the vulgar tongue; and he doubts it the more, as he suspects that he has been defrauded by shewing parts of it to professional friends. If this be really the case, nothing could be more malignant, or would give me greater displeasure. As it is uncertain where the impression of this work may be going on, I have come to the resolution of entreating your excellency, as I earnestly do, that it may please you to prohibit all the printers of your states from undertaking this poem; and in case that shall have been already done, that no bookseller may be allowed to publish and sell it. If any copies are already disposed of, I hope they may be recalled; and I should wish that one were transmitted to me for the purpose of examining it. I assure your excellency, that I shall receive all this at your hands as a particular favour, and you will easily perceive the propriety of such a request in an affair of this nature. So, with kissing your hand,” &c.

It appears likewise, that application had been made to Gregory XIII.; as, by order of that pontiff, a circular let-

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ter was written by the Cardinal S. Sisto to all the governors of the church. The following is a translation of one of these, addressed to the Governor of Perugia :—

“ Illustrious and very reverend Sir, as a Brother,

“ There having been stolen from Tasso, servant of the Duke of Ferrara, a work which he has composed, and this for the purpose of printing it against his will, in an unfinished state, your lordship will prevent the printers from printing, and the booksellers from selling, this work. But should an impression be already made, you will cause the whole to be seized and forfeited, a single copy excepted, which you will send to the aforesaid duke. And if by chance any one has been disposed of, you will order it to be restored, and placed among the others, of which you will give advice. Such is the will of his Beatitude. Of your Illust., &c.

As a brother. The Card. S. Sisto.

From Rome the VIIIth of December, 1576.” *

* The senate of Genoa, on the 11th of the same month, issued a decree against printing or publishing the *Jerusalem Delivered*, of which the following is a copy :—

M,DLXXVI die XI. Decembris.

Illustriss. et Excellentiss. D. Dux et Illustr. D. D. Gubernatores Excellentissimæ Reip. Genuen.

Dignis moti rationibus, et negotio ad calculos deliberato ad formam legum omni meliori modo, quo validius fieri potest, imposuerunt Antonio Roccataliatæ, habenti a Rep. privilegium stampæ, præsentî et intelligenti, quod non permittat typis excudi opus, seu poema

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Act. 32.Tasso visits
Modena.1577.
Act. 32.

In order to relieve the tortured mind of Torquato, he was invited to Modena during the festival of the nativity, by his friend Count Ferrante Gonzaga, governor of that city, with whom he had also spent a part of Easter, 1576. There he was introduced to different distinguished personages, and amongst others, to Torquinia Molza, a lady distinguished by her beauty, her genius, her skill in science, and her dexterity in Latin and Italian poetry.* Could feasting, music, and diversions of every sort, minister to a mind diseased, Torquato might have been happy; but, in a certain frame of mind, these, by a want of correspondence with its tone, seem to disturb it the more. In a letter to Scipio Gonzaga, dated Modena, January seventh, 1577, is the following passage: “I believed I should have found peace at Modena, and I have experienced greater misery than at Ferrara; but I am resolved to bear every thing patiently, and to laugh at the world. Moreover, I am finally determined not to leave the service of the duke; as, besides my obligations being such, that, were I to waste my life for him, I should scarcely have satisfied my debt, I fear that I find as much repose in his state, as I could elsewhere have. The persecutions which I suf-

versibus octavis in lingua Itala descriptum de Gestis olim per Christianos pro recuperatione Hierusaleni, et Terrae Sanctae, sive sit sub nomine D. TORQUATI TASSI, sive cujusvis alterius. Et hoc sine licentia ipsorum Excellentiss. Ducis, et Illustrium Gubernatorum, nec non et quod si poema vel opus praedictum ad ipsum, seu ad ejus typographos vel agentes pervenerit, illud retineat, retinerique curet ad ordinem ipsorum Excellentiss. Ducis, et Illustrium Gubernatorum. Et haec omnia sub poena eisdem arbitraria. Et sic ut supra decreverunt contrariis quibusdam non obstantibus.

* For an account of this illustrious lady see Tiraboschi *Storia*, &c. tom. VII. p. 50.

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fer are of such a nature, that they would disturb me as much in another situation ~~as~~ at Ferrara ; so that if desire of greater peace did not formerly induce me to change, what could be now my motive ! Amidst so many disquietudes, I have not abandoned the thoughts of poetry, so that I shall consider it as a singular favour if you will write me your opinion of the sonnets." * In another letter, of the eleventh of the same month, he says, " By the last which I wrote to your lordship, you will have perceived, that I am finally resolved both to suffer patiently every persecution, and to remain perpetually in the service of the duke. This resolution has not been less necessary than voluntary ; for certainly I neither could, nor ought to have done otherwise. Every thing, however, cannot be written." He had resolved, in the first paroxysm of despair, to request an excommunication against whoever retained his poem with the intention of publishing it, and Sig. James Boncompagno had shewn himself much disposed to employ his interest with his uncle the pontiff for this purpose. After the exertions of the duke, however, Tasso thought it better to make no other effort ; and in the letter last quoted, writing to Gonzaga on this subject, he says, " I have received this morning the letter your lordship sent me by Sig. Torquato Rangone, which, dear to me in many respects, is particularly so from the information it gives, that Sig. James has not forgotten me. But although

I promise myself much from the benevolence of that lord, I will not at present demand of him the favour of the excommunication." *

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Act. 33.

In the course of two days after this, a letter arrived from Rome, the purpose of which was to create suspicions in the mind of Tasso, of his best friend Scipio Gonzaga, informing him that this nobleman was extremely dissatisfied with his conduct, and determined to stop all future intercourse. Unlikely as this seemed, it had the effect of disturbing still more the clouded imagination of the poet; and the letter which he wrote to Gonzaga on the occasion cannot but excite compassion. "I desire," says he, "to know if your lordship be in any respect dissatisfied with me, and if I may indeed believe all that you have written. This request will seem strange, but there has a letter come from Rome, I know not from whom, or about what, which has exceedingly disquieted me. I have at last concluded that it is a mere malignity, and yet I wish to be certified by yourself, that I possess your wonted favour. From such a gentleman, I will expect, that, if you are offended, you will honestly tell me so, and thus give me an opportunity of vindicating my character from every calumny. I have preserved the letter, either to show it to you, or to send it when I shall have an opportunity, that you may clearly discern that I speak the truth. Life is a burden to me, and I cannot write. Communicate, I

His suspicions
and misery.

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beseech you, none of my epistles, either to a stranger, or to one of your family.* Something, I know not what, is whirling in my mind.” *

This letter is dated at Modena on the thirteenth of January, 1577, and it shews the state of mind in which our poet was, amidst all the attentions of friendship and of grandeur. Like Rousseau, his disease was now to imagine injuries in the most fortuitous events, and to suppose that expressions of admiration or attachment were only to betray, or turn him to ridicule. † Consumed by the thirst of renown, he had not calculated that envy would often dash from his lips the cup of praise ; nor did he reflect that it is still better to be occasionally deceived, than to lose the habit of confidence in mankind. At this time, some stanzas were

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 254. Mi si volge un non so che per l'animo.

† Dans le repos le plus tranquille il (Rousseau) vouloit toujours ou se croire, ou se dire persecuté. Sa maladie étoit d'imaginer dans les evenemens les plus fortuits, dans les rencontres les plus communes, quelque intention de lui nuire, comme si dans le monde tous les yeux de l'envie avoient été attachés sur lui. Marmontel, III. p. 209.

How much this disease (which in him seems to have been less the consequence of persecution than of selfishness and pride,) gained at last upon Rousseau, appears from his *Rousseau juge de Jean Jacques*, where he tells us that the most natural way of explaining the inhuman and mysterious conduct of mankind towards him is,—“ De supposer une ligue dont l'objet est la diffamation de J. J qu'elle a pris soin d'isoler pour cet effet. Et que dis-je supposer ? Par quelque motif que cette ligue se soit formée elle existe : sur votre propre rapport elle sembleroit universelle, elle est du moins grande, puissante, nombreuse, elle agit de concert dans le plus profond secret pour tout ce qui n'y entre pas, et surtout pour l'infortuné qui en est l'objet. Pour s'en défendre il n'a ni secours, ni ami, ni appui, ni conseil, ni lumiere ; tout n'est autour de lui que pieges, mensonges, trahisons, ténébres. Il est absolument seul, et n'a que lui seul pour ressource ; il ne doit attendre ni aide ni assistance de qui que ce soit sur la terre. Une position si singulière est un unique depuis l'existence du genre humain.” P. 307.

sent him, written by Horatio Ariosto, grand nephew of the poet, in which Tasso was extolled as the sovereign of Parnassus. To this he answered in a letter (dated Modena, January sixteenth,) and it would seem from it, that he had some suspicion that the compliments of Horatio were as treacherous, as they appeared to be exaggerated. From this epistle, I shall extract one passage, as it contains a high eulogy by our bard, of his great poetical rival, Ariosto, and describes the effect which the glory of that writer had in kindling his literary ambition. “The crown,” says he, “which you offer me is, in the opinion of the learned, and of the world, in my opinion certainly, it is on the head of your kinsman, from whom it would be more difficult to take it, than the club from Hercules. Would you dare to tear it from his venerable locks? Would you demonstrate yourself not only a bad judge, but an impious nephew? And who would receive from a hand, contaminated with wickedness, the symbol and ornament of his worth! For my part, I have neither the courage nor the inclination. That good Greek, who conquered Xerxes, was accustomed to say, that the trophies of Miltiades would not suffer him to sleep; not that he wished to destroy them, but because he burned to erect others equal or similar. And I will not deny that the crowns *semper florentis Homeri*, (I speak of your Ferrarese Homer,) have often made me *noctes vigilare serenas*, not from the desire of deflowering, or stripping them of their leaves; but, perhaps, through the restless longing of acquiring others, which, if not equal or similar, might at least be such as would long preserve

Tasso's emulation of Ariosto

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their verdure (I use your own expression) in the winter of death. Such has been the end of my long vigils, in which, if I do not succeed, I may be consoled by the example of many illustrious persons, whom it has not dishonoured to have sunk under great attempts." *

His anxiety to
obtain a faith-
ful domestic.

How Tasso was occupied at Ferrara during spring does not appear; but it is probable he was occasionally, or principally, engaged with his poem. As he was persuaded that his enemies had suborned his servants for the purpose of perusing his papers, he wrote to Guido Baldo, Marquis of Monte, entreating him to procure a domestic upon whom he might depend. "During the last eight months," says he, "I have had many sufferings; especially from servants, who, having been craftily introduced into my house, have at last discovered themselves my manifest enemies. They have stolen from me many of my most precious papers, and in other respects, I have suffered considerably; for, though their wickedness be well known to myself and many, it is rather cloaked than punished by the judges, so that they being unpunished, others will imitate them." He then entreats the marquis to send him a servant from one of his own castles, and to threaten this domestic, and beseech the Duke of Urbino to threaten him with the severest punishment, if he behaved improperly. "Tell him too," adds he, "that my word will be taken with regard to the propriety or impropriety of his conduct,

* *Oper.* vol. X, p. 190.

for judicial proof cannot at this place, and in such a case, be expected. . . As to his age, I should wish it to be not less than twenty-seven, nor more than thirty years ; strength and courage are of comparatively little importance, as I do not fear violence." After adjuring the marquis in the most solemn manner to listen to his request, he concludes with saying, "if this favour is not granted, I shall be constrained to leave a very affectionate master, or at least to change my residence."

These suspicions, of which Tasso was a prey, though perhaps not altogether without reason, seem to have been the combined effect of fear, lest his literary secrets should be disclosed, and dread that his poem would be stolen and published. On the one hand, he would not give his *Jerusalem* to the world, as he was led to believe it was both imperfect and licentious ; on the other, he was apprehensive that it would be printed in a surreptitious and mutilated manner, and that he would thus at once be dishonoured and defrauded. Such was his suspicion, his anxiety, and impatience, that, without waiting the result of his application to the marquis, he, a few days afterward, repeated his request. "Eight days ago," says he, "I wrote a long letter to your lordship, in which I gave you an account of my most grievous persecutions. I mentioned, at the same time, the extreme need I have of a domestic of those parts, trusty, and such as I might promise myself would not be easily corrupted. I entreated you likewise, not only to send me one, but to send him as soon as possible, and so to manage, that the authority

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of the Duke of Urbino might be added to that of your lordship ; and that he might be threatened with a heavy chastisement, if he should be guilty of infidelity towards me. I have also written to the duke on this subject, and although the time of answer be not yet come, yet partly from the doubt that my former letters may not have been properly directed, partly urged by necessity, I repeat my request and prayer. I solicit and importune you to confer upon me this favour, upon which, not only my peace, but, I may almost say, my life depends. My Lord Guido Baldo, if my ancient observance, if the great affection and worship which I have always borne you be in any esteem, prove it, I beseech you, on this urgent occasion. Did none of these motives influence you, let the consideration of your being a Christian, and a gentleman, move you to oblige me with a favour so just and pious ; to me so valuable, to you so easy. With regard to the servant, (I shall repeat what I mentioned in case of a mischance to the former letter,) I wish that he should be young, and of a condition, such as that he may not disdain to do any thing. The salary I will allow him is a scudo of gold and a half each month, in addition to many of my cloaths and other gifts. I would not have him a Pesarese, because I wish that he were not an acquaintance of any here, or of those dependent on this court ; but I would choose that he were of Urbino, or of some of the interior countries, or from one of your own castles. Such is my repeated request, and I shall expect an answer with the most impatient desire, as-

suring you, that it is in your power to oblige me in an infinite degree.” *

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The disturbance in the mind of Tasso was now fast increasing, and it only waited the approach of summer, which generally brought him feverish symptoms, to inflame it into delirium. The long and violent action of his mental sufferings must have disordered his whole frame; and, on the other hand, the morbid debility of his frame must have reacted, and increased his diseased feelings. The cup of bitterness was now full; the delightful hope of rivalling Ariosto, the confidence of happiness and independence, were now extinguished. His sleepless nights, his intensity of study, seemed now to have been employed in vain; and nature, which had given him such a desire of immortality, appeared to have refused him the means of attaining it. The sentiment of genius in a poet, cannot, like that of the philosopher, resist the chilling winter of neglect; it must be vivified and fanned by the vernal airs of contemporary approbation. Tasso seems to have sunk into a sense of his own incapacity; and, as his representative faculty was by nature and exercise prodigiously vivid, all that anticipation and reflection add to actual evils, united to torment him. His chagrin and misery were augmented by his genius, since the phantoms of fancy had, by its incessant activity, become almost equally lively with the impressions of external objects;

Effect of genius
in augmenting
misery.

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 304, 6.

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and by his creative mind, calamities, the most visionary and remote, were embodied and approximated. Nor must a disappointment of glory be estimated only by its own loss, since its attainment, together with its proper enjoyment, comprehends or procures others of subordinate importance. It seems to its votary to afford facilities for the gratification of every other desire: Love, interest, and ambition are all expectants waiting the success of the master passion; and, if it meets with disappointment, share and increase its tortures. Add to this, that, in such a situation, friendship, instead of soothing, is an addition of misery; the wound is mortal, and every attempt to heal it is not merely useless, but inhuman.

Summer at last came, and, as might naturally have been now dreaded, the delirium of Tasso was the consequence.*

Delirium of
Tasso.

* "It is curious," says Pinel, "to trace the effects of solar influence upon the return and progress of maniacal paroxysms. They generally begin immediately after the summer solstice, are continued with more or less violence during the heat of summer, and commonly terminate towards the decline of autumn. Their duration is limited within the space of three, four, or five months, according to differences of individual sensibility, and according as the season happens to be earlier, later, or unsettled in its temperature."—P. 10.

For several years the health of Tasso seems, as will appear from a retrospect, to have been much affected by the heats of summer. In August, 1574, he was (p. 195,) "assailed by an unexpected quartan, and by an infinite degree of languor." On the sixteenth of July, of the succeeding year, he thus writes: "I am in bed to discharge the accustomed and ordinary tribute which I pay every year to my fortune. These two days past I have been tormented by fever, and pains, and stupor of the head." (p. 223.) This year [1575] he had laid aside the regular labour at the *Jerusalem*; was perplexed with discordant opinions; with irregular labour and doubt, with impatience and disappointment. The following winter he disgusted the Duke of Ferrara by going to Rome; and his keenest

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He imagined that his persecutors had accused him, not only to his prince of treachery, but to the tribunal of the inquisition, of heresy. He had, indeed, occasionally employed himself in wandering amidst the mazes of theological metaphysics, and had found all the profit and satisfaction which may be expected from this exercise. He had conjured up to himself some doubts relative to the mystery of the Incarnation; had perplexed himself with the question, Whether the world sprung eternal from the Eternal Mind, or was created from nothing? and had, finally, investigated whether man was endued with an immortal soul. These inquiries had, however, been carried on in silence and in solitude; they had disturbed without corrupting his mind; and if his doubts were imparted to any one, they were communicated as problems, not as conclusions.* Fearing, nevertheless, that some imprudent words might have escaped him, he did not doubt that his enemies would avail themselves of this instrument of oppression; and he thought it would be most prudent to accuse himself to the inquisition. Whether that Tasso had really wavered in the faith, and that of

anguish was excited by the metaphysical, and especially scrupulous objections of his revisors. In a letter, dated June 7, 1576, he writes that he had discovered a hundred treasons; and soon afterward had a violent quarrel, in which he struck his adversary. The restlessness, apprehension, and dislike for particular persons, which precede derangement, seem now to have manifested themselves; and to his other causes of affliction was added, in the following winter, the fear of a surreptitious edition of his poem.

Tasso himself seems to date his general confirmed bad health from 1576.—*Oper.* vol. IX. pp. 351, 355.

* *Opere*, vol. VIII. p. 248, X. p. 378.

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Attempts to
stab a servant,

and is confined,

this the incautious openness of his temper had led him to make some discovery to his friends, I know not, since, though he asserts this more than once, it is in letters written in the midst of agitation and disease. I am inclined to think, that this suspicion of his own infidelity arose chiefly, or altogether, from the objections of his cruel and bigoted revisors. To his religious fears was added the suspicion that some of his enemies wished to poison or stab him; and even the Duke and Princesses of Este found it impossible to calm his anxieties. At last, one evening, in the chamber of the Duchess of Urbino, he ran with a knife or dagger [*coltello*] at one of her servants, of whom he was perhaps suspicious, or who had given him some cause of offence. Upon this act of violence, the only one which we hear of his ever committing, he was confined in some apartments in the court of the palace. This happened on the evening of the seventeenth of June, 1577, as we learn from a letter of Maffeo Veniero, a patrician and poet of Venice, at that time residing in Ferrara. Mentioning to the Grand Duke of Florence the news of the court, in a letter, dated June 18th, he says, “Tasso was yesterday incarcerated, having, in a chamber of the Duchess of Urbino, drawn a dagger to a servant; but he has been arrested, rather on account of his disorder, and for the sake of curing, than of punishing him. He believes that he is guilty of the sin of heresy, and dreads being poisoned, owing to some distracting humour, proceeding, I believe, from some melancholic blood compressed at the heart, and

fuming to the brain. The case, indeed, is an unhappy one, whether one considers his genius, or his goodness." *

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The idea of Tasso, that he had lost all the favour of the duke, seemed to him now to be confirmed ; and he bewailed his unhappy fate in the most pathetic manner. He wrote a supplicatory epistle to Alphonso, and entreated Coccapani, the steward of that prince, to deliver it. This gentleman, who had always been a sincere friend of our poet, entreated him to be composed ; assured him that the confinement was merely temporary ; and that the duke was not enraged, but afflicted at his situation. Tasso, however, still insisted that the letter should be delivered ; and it was sent to Alphonso with the following billet of Coccapani : " Signior Tasso sent to request that I would visit him ; which having done, he took me aside, that he might not be heard ; told me the subject of the included letter, which he wished me to open ; and begged me to present it to your highness, and entreat an answer. For my part I dissuaded him from sending it, seeing that your highness, as I told him last night, has no end in his confinement but his own welfare, and that he might confide in my assertion. In sum, he has wished that I should send it, protesting, at the same time, that he cannot bear to be confined ; and that, if retained a prisoner, he will fall into despair. He promises likewise to use cathartics, and, provided he is restored to his apartment, to do every thing

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that your highness shall command. You will resolve and judge what may be for his good.” *

Is taken to
Belriguardo.

The duke, compassionating Tasso, and, as it would appear, sincerely interested in his welfare, allowed him his liberty, and ordered him to be attended by his most able physicians. This seemed to have a good effect; and in order to amuse him, and complete his convalescence, he was conducted to the delightful palace of Belriguardo. The memory of the Duke of Ferrara has suffered, and it would, indeed, seem justly, on account of his treatment of the poet who has immortalized him. At the commencement, however, of his disease, that prince “ shewed him (as we learn from Tasso himself,) the affection, not only of a patron, but of a father, or brother;” † and if he had causes of displeasure against his bard, forgot them in his woes. It is consoling to humanity when any of the stories of cruelty and ingratitude, which have been accumulated in the course of ages, is found to be suspicious; and that man, guilty and wretched as he is, is less criminal, and less odious, than he is often represented.

The duke, before carrying our poet to Belriguardo, had, in order to set his mind at rest on the subject of heresy, wished him to present himself at the holy office in Ferrara, to be examined as to his faith. The inquisitor, who readily perceived that all his doubts were only the effects of a heated imagination, assured Tasso, in the most mild and tender manner, that he was a good and faithful catholic, and de-

* *Opere*. vol. X. p. 238.† *Ibid*, vol. VIII. p. 255.

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clared him free and absolved from all accusation. It would seem that he might now have been at rest on the score of heresy ; and as the duke affirmed repeatedly to Tasso that he was extremely well satisfied with him, the poet might have been equally at ease with respect to his suspicions of being accused of treason. In spite, however, of these assurances, and in the midst of all the delights of Belriguardo, this unhappy man did not cease to torment himself. He began to imagine that the sentence of the inquisitor was invalid, and his absolution void, because the accustomed formalities were not made use of ; and the reason of this, as he supposed, was, that the duke might not discover the malignity of his persecutors. * He imagined, also, that, by the ill offices done to him by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Alphonso was not so pacified as he pretended to be. These conceits, but especially the affair of the inquisition, tormented him to such a degree, that it was painful to see him ; and as he wished to be conducted to the convent of the fathers of St Francis at Ferrara, the duke ordered the following letter to be written by one of his secretaries to his steward Coccapani : “ His highness, sir, has commanded me to write to you, that Tasso returns to Ferrara, with the design of going into the convent of the friars of St Francis, and of having two brothers of the convent as his companions. But as he is accustomed to say every thing in confession, and to break forth into a moun-

Disensd ima-
gination of
Tasso.* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 371.

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tain of follies, it seems to his highness, that he is now worse than ever. The duke says, that if any friars shall be contented to stay in the company of Tasso, he will not object to it; only they are to be such as are deputed by father Righini, who well knows what persons will be most suitable for this purpose; and that they ought, with some dexterity, to admonish him of his follies. But should there be no friar who will accept of, or is suitable for, this employment, his highness wills, that Tasso should be remitted to his usual apartments in the court, since, if these fathers refuse the charge, you will give him to understand, that it will be better he should be in his own chambers, than that he should be troublesome to their society. At any rate, let it be provided, that, upon his return, he may be served by the two porters and servants as before. From Belriguardo, 11th July, 1577."

It appears that these Religious gave shelter to this unhappy man, and afforded him their charitable assistance; as it is certain that he remained with them several days. Such, indeed, was the satisfaction which Tasso felt in the claustral life, that he informs Alphonso, in a letter written from the convent, that it was his intention, as soon as he was cured, to become a friar. *

The same evening that he arrived at the convent, as he

* Non mi tolga questo trattenimento d'alcun Padre il quale m'è di sommo diletto, avendo io massimamente deliberato, finita la purga, se potrò farlo con buona grazia di Vostra Altezza, farmi Frate.

was more and more tormented with the idea of the invalidity of his sentence, our poet drew up a petition to be presented in Rome to the cardinals of the supreme court of inquisition. In this, he dwelt upon the wrong which he imagined he had received from the inquisitor at Ferrara, who had not granted him leave to give in his defences, lest he should disclose to the Duke of Ferrara the persecutions he had undergone. “Torquato Tasso,” says he, “your most humble servant, entered some months ago into a most firm opinion, that he had been accused to the holy office; for he perceived that by subtle arts he was in possession of some prohibited books, though altogether without any such intention. Besides, the petitioner was conscious that to some people, who have discovered themselves to be his enemies, and who are confidants and dependants of people of consideration, by whom he has been much persecuted, that to these he had used some very scandalous expressions, which might bring his faith into question. Now, the petitioner being presented, was absolved rather as the victim of melancholy, than as heretical.” . . . Tasso proceeds to beseech the cardinals to acquaint Alphonso, that, as the petitioner had been accused, and by the sentence given in Ferrara, not fully absolved, it was the duty of this prince, not only graciously to deliver him from the continual fear of death, but to allow him to go to Rome to be cleared and cured. That thus Alphonso would consult both his [Tasso’s] honour and quiet, since it was only by satisfying the duke of the truth, that any security could be had for his wretched and ensnared life.

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Act. 33.Petitions the
court of in-
quisition.

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From the tenour of this petition, one may see the wild and distracted phantasy of Tasso, a circumstance which is also shown by the following letter: It is addressed to Scipio Gonzaga, and its object was to induce him to present the supplication from our poet to the cardinals.

“ Most illustrious and most excellent Lord,

“ Your lordship will comprehend, from the inclosed prayer, the condition in which I am. Either I am not merely of a melancholic temperament, but almost mad ; or I am too cruelly persecuted. I see only one path which can conduct me to peace of mind, and tranquillise my thoughts. And I supplicate your lordship, by the ancient friendship betwixt us, by that great affection which you bear me, and by christian charity, that you will proceed with me in this business with that sincerity which you have always practised. I wish you to present my petition to the cardinal of Pisa, or to any other cardinal of the inquisition ; and let not any one persuade you to deny me this kindness, from the idea that I am not altogether in my perfect mind. But present my petition to the cardinal of Pisa ; employ all your influence and authority at Rome ; labour with all diligence and efficacy, that my lord duke may see the truth, since, from this beginning, as I assuredly hope, I shall discover to him many things, or, if am deceived, will acknowledge my error, and submit with joy to the advice of physicians. Such is my distrust, that I have confidence in nobody except your lordship, with whose writing I am acquainted ; and if you will certify me that

the petition is presented, I shall live in peace. I now kiss your hands, beseeching you that the authority of no one may have more weight with you than my ancient observance, and the duty enjoined by your conscience and honour. And again, I recommend my safety to your faith." From Ferrara the 11th July.

"To rescue me fully from all suspicion, you would do me a singular favour if you would use your influence, that the Cardinal de'Medici may demand my liberty as a favour from the Duke of Ferrara, who, on account of the offices done against me by the grand duke, is highly enraged with me. The anger of the grand duke arose from the circumstance, that he was informed that I had revealed to the Duke of Ferrara, &c.* I cannot be more minute, but this is gospel. I confess my fault, a fault partly of necessity, partly of imprudence; but my errors deserve not such a punishment. Your most obliged servant,

"TORQUATO TASSO."

Such, however, was the suspicious temper of this unhappy person, that, distrusting even his friend Scipio, he wrote to the same effect to Sig. Curzio Gonzaga, a literary noble-

* "Under this *et cetera*," says Muratori, when transmitting this letter to Apostolo Zeno, "I have covered an indecent word, which it would not be allowable to give to the press." *Opere del Tasso*, vol. X. p. 237. It was probably some harsh epithet applied to Alphonso. Serassi, who only publishes a part of this letter, says, it is, "tratta dall' Archivio segreto del Sereniss. Sig. Duca di Modena," (p. 250.) It had, however, long been published in the works of Tasso, vol. X. p. 235.

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man, then at Rome, with whom he was in habits of friendship. To him Tasso sent the same petition, accompanied in like manner with a supplicatory epistle. He entreats him, if his [Tasso's] life is dear to him, to present his supplication to the cardinals, that the duke might as quickly as possible be informed of the truth. He begs Curzio also, not to believe the rumour spread abroad concerning him, till the truth should be divulged, by which he probably means a report of his insanity, which seems to have distressed him greatly.* These letters must have remained at Ferrara, and been consigned to the duke without being sent; as they were imparted to Serassi by the celebrated Tiraboschi, who found them in the secret archives at Modena. Thither they must have been carried with the other writings of the family of Este, when, after the decease of Alphonso, that illustrious house was driven from Ferrara by ecclesiastical persecution.

Torquato now submitted to cathartics, the remedy always applied to his disorder. † This he did with very bad will, as,

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 257.

† Both Hippocrates (*Oper. omn.* p. 460. Ed. Foesii,) and Galen attribute melancholy to black bile, of which the proper remedy is to be sought for in cathartics. "In omnibus autem animi alienationibus; (says the latter,) si timor atque tristitia diu perseverant, atram bilem in causa esse est indicium," *de causis Symptomatum*, lib. II. In the many allusions also to madness, which are to be found in the ancient poets, Hellebore (for the production of which, the two islands of Anticyra were famous, and which was a powerful purgative,) is spoken of as the remedy. See Horace, *Epist.* 2. lib. II. v. 136. *De arte poetica*, v. 300. *Sat.* 3. lib. II. v. 82. *ib.* v. 165. Ovid, in the fourth book of his *Epistolæ de Ponto*, when speaking of his banishment, has the following lines :

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so with letters.

in the first place, he saw little occasion for them ; secondly, he nauseated medicines ; and, lastly, he dreaded being poisoned. The fear of the invalidity of the sentence of the inquisitor, and of having mortally offended the duke, alternately distracted him ; and he seems to have molested that prince with letters and messages on these subjects. From one of these, the following is extracted : “ What I now say, is known to the lady duchess, to whom I foretold it long ago ; and I was speaking of it to her that evening when I was taken ; but of this I need say no more, since the infinite clemency of your highness has pardoned my offence. I will also say, that I learned that the Duke of Florence had been given by my persecutors to understand, that I had revealed to your highness part of the tampering which had been practised

Littus ad Euxinum, si quis mihi diceret, ibis,
Et metues arcu ne feriare Getæ ;
I, bibe, dixissem, purgantes pectore succos :
Quicquid et in tota nascitur Anticyra.

Epist. III. ap. finem.

The physicians of the age of Tasso had the same idea of melancholy and its cure, so that he was evacuated without mercy till the close of his life. He always promises, when on his good behaviour, purgarsi. In a letter to Alphonso, to be by and by quoted, he says, “ s’io saprò, che da lei mi sia concessa, (a favour he was asking) mi purgherò non sol volentieri ma con allegrissimo cuore ; benchè in ogni modo giudico necessario il purgarmi ; perocchè ben conosco, che l’aver sospettato di V. A. e l’aver de’ meri sospetti parlato pubblicamente è pazzia degna di purga.... Da qui innanzi, s’io parlerò ad alcuno, confesserò a tutti quel, che chiaramente conosco, di purgarmi per umore.” Fortunately, nature had given to Tasso an antidote against the poison of his physicians in a morbid delicacy of taste, so that, as he rejected many of their doses, they did not occasion him all the ill they would otherwise have done.

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on me, and that his anger was much kindled against me. But your highness perhaps may not know to what end I say these things, and this I shall now declare. I confess that I deserve punishment for my faults, and I thank your highness that he has absolved me from them; I confess that I deserve to be purged of my melancholy humours, and I thank your highness that he causes this to be done. Of this I am certain, however, that in many things I am not an humourist, and that your highness is (pardon, I beseech you, this expression,) as much as any prince in the world can be.* You will not believe that I have suffered persecutions in your service, and yet I have undergone most cruel and deadly ones; you believe that you have liberated me from the inquisition, and yet I am fastened more than ever." After having entreated the duke to use due diligence to investigate every thing fully on these points, he proceeds: "Do not deny me this favour, oh, most just prince! in this extremity of my melancholic humour, and this you ought to do, as well on your own, as on my account. If I shall know that this is granted, I shall use the purgatives not only willingly, but with a chearful heart. Indeed, I think these necessary on every account, as I well know that the having suspected your highness, and having spoken publicly of mere suspicions, is

* Tasso is here retorting on Alphonso the charge of being filled with melancholy humours, that is, of mental derangement. "Confesso d'esser degno di purga per lo mio umor melancolico, e ringrazio, V. A. che mi fà purgare; ma son sicuro che in molte cose Io non son umorista, e che è V. A. (perdoni la supplico questa parola) quanto possa esser Principe del mondo."

CHAP. XII.

A. D. 1577.
Act. 33.

a folly which requires a cathartic. But in other respects, oh, most clement prince ! I beseech you, by the love of Christ, to believe, and you will believe the truth, that I am not so mad as you are misled. Henceforth, if I shall speak to any one, I will own, what I clearly know, that I am purged on account of the humour." In a postscript he adds, " I beseech your highness to grant permission that I may write a single letter to my lady duchess. 'This may be shown you by her, and you shall see that I will speak neither of a suspicion of death, nor present any petition; but that I shall write on another subject ; and I kiss the hand of your highness."

However favourably disposed the duke might be towards Torquato, he could not help being wearied out with these suspicions and expressions. He was led, too, to give less credit to the accusations of the poet against others, as his mistrust extended to himself. Besides, that mixture of madness and of wisdom which were united in the same unhappy person, would have the effect of making his wanderings seem in some sort voluntary, and that appear obstinacy, which was in fact delirium. Whether Alphonso was really angry, or thought that rigour would be useful, I know not, but he forbade our bard to write, either to himself, or to the Duchess of Urbino. This circumstance increased, to an infinite degree, his agitation and his fears, so that, as soon as he found a solitary moment, he resolved to provide for his security by flight.

Tasso resolves
to fly from
Ferrara.

At the conclusion of a former chapter, we have seen Torquato sheltered from the fury of fortune, in what he then

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considered as a safe and tranquil harbour.* We are to behold him once more a wandering mariner, launching on the ocean of life, with reason frequently not at the helm, and dashed by the waves and among the rocks of misery. “If a man, who has reflected, (says Condorcet on an analogous occasion,) if a man, who has reflected, could be tempted to be proud of any thing, how capable is such an example of restoring him to himself? of shewing him that the advantages, the most real and personal, are not more certain than those with which the most frivolous vanity is apt to be elated; that the gifts of nature are as frail as those of fortune; that a man, without ceasing to be himself, may cease to be all that he was; and that nothing but the insensible derangement of some organ is necessary to tear at once, from a superior genius, all that distinguished him even from the beings the most inferior to the generality of mankind.” †

Tu magnanimo Alfonso! il qual ritogli
Al furor di fortuna, e guidi in porto,
Me peregrino errante, e fra gli scogli,
E fra l'onde agitato, e quasi absorto.

Gerus. lib. c. I. st. 4.

And thou, Alphonso! who from fortune's ire,
Heroic prince! didst in a port me save;
When wandering round exposed to tempests dire,
Toss'd mid the rocks, and lash'd by every wave.

† *Eloge de M. Bertin.*

APPENDIX.

A P P E N D I X.

No. I.—P. 4.

SONNET OF BERNARDO TASSO TO GINEVRA MALATESTA.

Poi che la parte men perfetta e bella
Ch'al tramontar d'un dì perde il suo fiore,
Mi toglie il cielo, e fanne altrui signore
Ch'ebbe più amica, e graziosa stella;
Non mi togliete voi l'anima, ch'ancella
Fece la vista mia del suo splendore;
Quella parte più nobile e migliore
Di cui la lingua mia sempre favella.
Amai questa beltà caduca e frale,
Come immagin dell' altra eterna e vera,
Che pura scese dal più puro cielo.
Questa sia mia, e d'altri l'ombra e'l velo,
Ch'al mio amor, a mia fe salda ed intera
Poca mercè saria pregio mortale.

No. I,

No. I.

Since the great Ruler, whom the fates obey,
 To other arms resigns thy fleeting bloom;
 Since to a happier youth he pleas'd to doom
 That form, which, though so fair, is yet but clay :
 Oh, still, Ginevra ! still permit to stay
 With me thy soul, to cheer this cheerless gloom ;
 Leave that blest soul which shall survive the tomb,
 And, pure, return to unpolluted day.
 'Twas this I lov'd, 'twas not the mortal frame ;
 Or if I lov'd that peerless form of thine,
 'Twas as the mind's attire, it rais'd my flame.
 Oh, then, to me, to me the soul resign ;
 His be its veil—for higher is the claim
 Than mortal recompence, of love like mine.

No. II.—P. 46.

SONNETS OF BERNARDO TASSO, ON THE DEATH OF PORTIA
 ROSSI HIS WIFE.

No. II.

The following sonnets of Bernardo Tasso on the death of his wife, will not appear indifferent to those even who are acquainted with the beautiful compositions of Petrarch on the loss of Laura, with which they seem to me to vie in excellence,

I.

Quegli occhi chiari, che fur proprio un Solo
 Sulle tenebre nostre oscure e folte,
 Ha chiusi acerba morte ; ed ha sepolte
 Quelle bellezze al mondo altiere e sole :
 Le saggie, oneste, angeliche parole,
 Ch'an mill'alme sviate, al ben far volte,
 Post' ha in silenzio ; tal che pene molte
 A gran ragion il cor si lagna e duole :
 Dunque urna oscura, e freddo sasso serra
 Tutti i diletti miei, tutto il mio bene,
 Perchè di pianto, e non mai d'altro abbonde ?
 Chi m'ha tolto mia gioia, e chi l'asconde ?
 Ahi dispietata morte, ahi cruda terra !
 O vita piena sol d'affanni e pene !

II.

No. II.

Vo ricercando in ogni parte, ov'io
 Dipinsi col pensier la bella immagine,
 Di rivederla ancor bramoso e vago
 Per cibâr di sua vista il desir mio.
 Ma pensando scemar, più cresco il rio,
 E grave duolo, e più l'anima impiaga:
 Poi mi sovvièn, che l'angelico e vago
 Volto e rinchiuso in un eterno oblio.
 Allor (lasso) comincio a gridar forte:
 O mia fedel compagna, ove sei gita?
 Perchè mi lasci qui querulo e solo?
 Deh fosse almen così profonda e forte
 La piaga del mio affanno e del mio duolo,
 Che mi togliesse la misera vita.

III.

Deh perchè rinnovelli ad ora, ad ora
 Pensier le piaghe mie? perchè quel volto,
 Che morte ha spento (oimè) terra sepolto,
 Mi pingi inanzi, ond' io mi strugga e mora?
 Tu fosti un tempo il refrigerio e l'ora
 Della mia stanca vita; or fiero e stolto
 Hai ogni mio piacer sì in pianger volto
 Ch'io non ho lieta, o riposata un' ora:
 Già solevi venir lieto e ridente
 A colmarmi di gioia: or egro e mesto
 Riedi sol per turbare ogni mia pace:
 Tardo al partir sei fatto, al tornar presto:
 O memoria per me troppo tenace
 De' beni andati, e del mio mal presente!

IV.

No. II.

Qualor in Ciel di rivederti spero
 Fra gli spirti più chiari e grati a Dio,
 Uno in me nasce di morir desio,
 Che ben altro che morte alcun non chero
 Ma il dispietato mio destino, e fiero,
 Del mio duol vago più che d'onda il rio,
 S'opponne al mio voler (misero) ond'io
 Moro sol colla voglia, e co'l pensiero :
 In cui così m'affisso, che coll' ale
 Destre e leggiere sue m'innalzo a volo
 Fra le schiere più belle de' Beati :
 Ivi pasco il desio negli occhi amati
 Lieto : o piacer uman come sei frate !
 Il pensier fugge, e meco lascia il dolo.

No. III.—P. 82.

OF CHIVALRY, AND ROMANTIC POETRY.

No. III.

The following passage relative to Chivalry, and its effects on poetry, is taken from the *Discours de Reception* of M. Chamfort, who succeeded M. de Ste Palaye as a member of the French Academy, and by consequence was naturally led to speak on this subject, in his eulogy on his predecessor :—

“ On convient que l'ancienne chevalerie en général jeta dans les ames une énergie nouvelle, moins dure, moins feroce, que celle dont l'Europe avait senti les effets à l'époque de Charlemagne. On convient qu' elle marqua d'une empreinte de grandeur imposante la plupart des événemens qui suivirent sa naissance ; qu'elle forma de grands caractères, qu'elle prépara même l'adoucissement des moeurs, en portant la générosité dans la guerre, le platonisme dans l'amour, la galanterie dans la ferocité ; delà ces contrastes qui nous frappent si vivement aujourd' hui, qui mêlent et confondent les idées les plus disparates, Dieu et les Dames, le catechisme et l'art d'aimer ; qui placent la licence près de la devotion, la grandeur d'ame près de la cruauté, le scrupule

près du meurtr, qui excitent à-la-fois l'enthousiasme, l'indignation, et le sourire; qui montrent souvent dans le même homme, un héros et un insensé, un soldat, un anachorète, et un amant; enfin qui multiplient dans les annales de cette époque, des exploits dignes de la fable, des vertus ornemens de l'histoire et surtout les crimes de toutes les deux : mœurs vicieuses, mais piquantes, mais pittoresques; mœurs féroces, mais fières, mais poétiques. Aussi l'Europe moderne ne doit-elle qu'à la chevalerie les deux grands ouvrages d'imagination qui signalèrent la renaissance des lettres. Depuis les beaux jours de la Grèce et de Rome, la Poesie, fugitive, errante, loin de l'Europe avait, comme l'enchanteresse du Tasse, disparu de son palais éclipé: elle attendait depuis quinze siècles, que le tems y ramenât des mœurs nouvelles, fécondes en tableaux, en images dignes d'arrêter ses regards; elle attendait l'instant, non de la barbarie, non de l'ignorance, mais l'instant qui leur succède, celui de l'erreur, de la crédule erreur, de l'illusion facile qui met entre ses mains le ressort du merveilleux, mobile surnaturel de ses fictions embellies. Ce moment est venu; les triomphes des chevaliers ont préparé les siens, leurs mains victorieuses ont de leurs lauriers tressé la couronne qui doit orner sa tête. A leurs voix, accourent de l'orient les esprits invisibles, moteurs de cieux et des enfers, les fées, les génies, désormais ses ministres; ils accourent, et déposent à ses pieds les talismans divers, les attributs variés, emblèmes ingénieux de leur puissance, de leur puissance soumise à la Poesie, souveraine légitime des enchantemens, et des prestiges. Elle règne: quelle foule d'images se pressent, se succèdent sous ses yeux! ces batailles où triomphent l'impétuosité, la force, le courage, plus que l'ordre et la discipline; ces harangues des chefs, ces femmes guerrières; ces dépouilles des vaincus, trophées de la victoire: ces vœux terribles de l'amitié vengeresse de l'amitié, ces cadavres rendus aux larmes des parens, des amis; ces armes des chevaliers fameux, objet, après leur mort, de dispute et de rivalité; tout vous rappelle Homère. Et c'est la patrie de l'Arioste, du Tasse, c'est l'Italie qui a méritée cette gloire."

One of the most curious contrasts we meet with in the history of the knights of chivalry, is the grossness of their superstition, compared with the refinement of their love. "Les premières leçons qu'on leur donoit, (says Ste Palaye,) regardoient principalement *l'amour de Dieu & des Dames*, c'est-à-dire, la religion et la galanterie. Si l'on en croit la chronique de Jean de Saintré,

No. III. c'étoient ordinairement les Dames qui se chargeoient du soin de leur apprendre en même temps leur catechisme et l'art d'aimer Mais autant la devotion qu'on leur inspiroit étoit accompagnée de puerilites et de superstitions, autant l'amour des Dames, qu'on leur recommançoit, étoit il rempli de raffinement et de fanatisme. Il semble qu'on ne pouvoit, dans ces siècles ignorans et grossiers, présenter aux hommes la religion sous une forme assez materielle pour la mettre à leur portée; ni leur donner en même temps une idee de l'amour assez pure, assez metaphysique, pour prevenir les desordres et les excès dont étoit capable une nation qui conservoit partout le caractère impetueux qu'elle montrait à la guerre.

Pour mettre le jeune novice en état de pratiquer ces bizarres leçons de galanterie, on lui faisoit de bonne heure faire choix de quelqu'une des plus nobles, de plus belles et des plus vertueuses Dames des Cours qu'il frequentoit; c'étoit elle à qui, comme à l'Etre souverain, il rapportoit tous ses sentimens, toutes ses pensées, et toutes ses actions. Cet amour aussi indulgent que la religion de ce temps-là, se prêtoit et s'accomodoit à d'autres passions moins pures et moins honnêtes.—*Mémoires sur l'ancienne Chevalerie*, tom. I. p. 7.

No. IV.—P. 99.

OF THE RINALDO.

No. IV. The great quantity of materials which I have to dispose of upon subjects still more interesting than the *Rinaldo*, renders me unwilling to dwell upon it at much length. Abstractedly considered, it is a beautiful, relatively to the age of the writer, it is a wonderful poem. Still, however, its principal value arises from its being the measure of the powers of a great mind, and an evidence of their direction, in a certain stage of their progress. The most remarkable circumstance attending it is, as I have said in the text, the example it affords of a mixture of classic and romantic poetry; and the strength of judgment of its young author, in stemming the current of popular prejudice.

Tasso's poem is divided into twelve books, and its subject is the exploits of the young Paladin Rinaldo, atchieved for the love of Clarice. This Rinaldo is not the hero of the *Jerusalem*; but the champion of whom so much is said in

the poems of Boiardo, and of Ariosto. In the work of Tasso, this Paladin is kept always in view, and his adventures are related in one continued narrative, without any perplexing interruption. These adventures are sufficiently remarkable, and follow one another in very quick succession. No. IV.

Many of the fictions of this poem are extremely beautiful; such is that of the Temple of Beauty in the third canto, and the Palace of Courtesy in the seventh; the latter of which enables Tasso to pay a very graceful compliment to a number of his friends and patrons. Of these fictions several have with some modification been made use of by the author in his *Jerusalem Delivered*. Thus the miraculous bark that conveys the two knights from the Palace of Courtesy, seems to be the same which carries Ubaldo and Charles, to bring back Rinaldo from the Fortunate Isles. The escape of the one Rinaldo from Floriana, of whom he had been enamoured, resembles that of the other from Armida. The sepulchre raised by magic to receive the body of the Knight of the tomb, is in the *Jerusalem* applied to a similar purpose, in the episode concerning Sueno. The fire at the entrance of the cave of love, and the fires which burst forth between Rinaldo, and the Knights of Mambrino; may be considered as the rude idea of a fiction, which was to be employed with such magical effect in the *Jerusalem Delivered*.

Mr Hoole, by whom most of these coincidences has been remarked, observes, that the poem of *Rinaldo* seems to have been known to Spenser. He instances the similarity of the valley of Despair, in the eleventh canto of Torquato's work, to that described by the English poet in his story of the Red Cross Knight. "The supernatural fire (continues he,) that defends the entrance to the house of the enchanter Busirane, in the legend of Britomart, will doubtless occur to the reader's recollection, on perusing the part where Rinaldo and Florindo pass through the flame, to consult the oracle of love.—The account of the lion tamed by Clarillo, and killed by Rinaldo, will remind us of the lion attending on Una, and killed by Sansloy." *

No. IV.

What is more certain is, that the passage in the fifth book of the *Rinaldo*, where Florindo narrates, how, being disguised in a female dress, he introduced himself among the virgins, at the games celebrated before the princess Olinda, for the purpose of kissing her, has been copied by Guarini, in Act II. Scene 1. of his *Pastor Fido*. Thus this latter poet has not only closely imitated the *Aminta*, but has pillaged the other works of his rival, for embellishments to his pastoral poem.

How far the fictions of Torquato himself are original, my limited acquaintance with the writings of the *Romanzatori* prevents me from deciding; and the poem has been so little the object of curiosity in Italy, that nobody has endeavoured to discover the quarries from which its materials may perhaps have been taken. Great as were its merits, it wanted that gaiety which enlivens the *Orlando Innamorato*, and the poem of Ariosto; nor did it possess that soothing and voluptuous sweetness which is so frequently to be found in the *Jerusalem Delivered*. There appears in the *Rinaldo* very little of that discrimination of character, which its author so wonderfully displays in his greater work; and which has indeed been neglected by the romantic poets in general. But the young bard already understood the art of contrast, and he has availed himself of it very happily in the seventh canto, where the pleasing description of the Palace of Courtesy succeeds to the gloomy tale of the Knight of the Tomb; and in the eleventh, where the Hill of Hope soothes the mind which had been saddened by the painting of the Valley of Despair.

It seems to me, also, that Tasso had already acquired, in some degree, that dignified style, that long majestic march, which is so characteristic of his heroic poetry. This arose partly from his assiduous study of Virgil, which strongly appears in his *Rinaldo*; partly from the natural elevation of his conceptions and loftiness of his character. He partook not of that mobility of imagination, that facility and gaiety, which must be possessed by him who would give interest to a very long detail of romantic adventures. For such a task, pathos, sublimity, and tenderness, seem less necessary than humour, cheerfulness, and ease. It is not improbable that the feeling of his deficiencies in these latter qualities, as much as the strength of his judgment, directed him to the path in which

he has acquired immortality. Still, however, this supposes great rectitude of No. IV. thinking, and acuteness of discernment.

It would lead me too far if I were to select striking passages from the *Rinaldo*. Mr Hoole particularly remarks the spirited description of the enchanted chariot employed to carry off Clarice, in the fourth canto, and the account of the discipline in the camp of Charlemagne, in the sixth. A beautiful *Impresa* of one of the champions of the *Rinaldo*, (canto ix. stanza 8.) has been taken notice of by Drummond of Hawthornden. On his shield was represented a rock, dashing into pieces the waves by which it was assaulted, with the motto, *Rompe ch'il percote*: "It breaks whatever strikes upon it." I may mention too, as painted with much vigour, the combat betwixt Rinaldo and Orlando in the sixth canto: the reader, however, will be more highly amused with the battle of those heroes, in the xxvii. and xxviii. cantos of Bernis *Orlando Innamorato*. This latter work appears to me fully as entertaining as the poem of Ariosto; the introductory stanzas to the cantos are excellent, and some of them are exceedingly philosophical.

Mr Hoole, to whom Tasso is greatly indebted, has given a translation of the *Rinaldo*, of considerable fidelity and elegance. Sometimes, however, he appears to misconceive his author; but what one has principally to regret in Mr Hoole, is feebleness, diffusion, and the want of a certain *tact*, a perception of the minute and delicate shades of meaning; or an incapacity of exhibiting them. An example will explain my meaning. At the end of the description of the discipline in Charlemagne's camp, Tasso laments the sloth and effeminacy which had crept into the Christian armies, at a time when the Turks were dreadfully menacing the subjugation of the West. He compares the Ottoman Empire to a serpent, which had just been devouring Greece, and was awfully advancing to prey upon the rest of Europe.

Che meraviglia è poi, s'el rio serpente?
Sotto cui Grecia omai languendo muore,
Orgoglioso minaccia all' occidente,
E par, che'l preme già, che già il divorc?

Can. VI, St. 13.

No. IV.

What wonder then, if that huge dragon, fed
 By dying Greece, o'er which he rears his head ;
 Proud to the west should speed with added power,
 And seem to crush already, and devour !

Mr Hoole translates, in the following manner, the above passage of the *Rinaldo*, by which he totally destroys the original image :—

What wonder then, if that infernal pest,
 That ancient foe to dying Greece confest,
 Should now with threats our western world annoy,
 By ruthless arts, industrious to destroy !

No. V.—P. 117.

ATTACHMENT OF THE EPIC POETS TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF
 PLATO.—EXPLANATION OF A PASSAGE IN THE JERUSA-
 LEM DELIVERED.

No. V.

The three epic poets, Virgil, Milton, and Tasso, agree in having entertained a great admiration of the writings of Plato. Platonis sententias, (says Donatus in his life of Virgil,) omnibus aliis prætulit.—“ Thus, from the laureat fraternity of poets, [they are the words of Milton, in that noble digression in one of his works, where he gives an account of his conduct and pursuits,] riper years, and the ceaseless round of study, and reading, led me to the shady spaces of philosophy, but chiefly to the divine volumes of Plato, and his equal Xenophon ; where, if I should tell ye what I learnt of chastity and love * * *, and how the first and chiefest office of Love begins and ends in the soul, producing those happy twins of her divine generation, Knowledge and Virtue, with such abstracted sublimities as these, it might be worth your listening.” *

* *Apology for Smectymnuus*.—*P. Works*, vol. I. p. 225. 8vo. See also Milton's Letter to Diodati, where his passion for the Platonic philosophy, and intense love of the beautiful, the Τῆς καλῆς, is warmly depicted.

With regard to Tasso, there is still preserved at Rome a copy of the *Timæus* No. V. of Plato, with manuscript notes by this poet, written, as is evident from the neatness of the characters, when he was very young. "I read, (says he on one occasion,) I read heretofore all the writings of Plato, and many seeds of his doctrine remained in my mind."* Of Tasso's fond admiration for this philosopher, some very striking evidences will be produced in the course of this work.

In fact, without some acquaintance with Plato's writings, it is not possible to understand completely those of our poet. Of this, the following instance may be given, where a very important and beautiful passage of the *Jerusalem*, has been totally misunderstood by all its English translators. When Rinaldo, in the XVIII. canto of that poem, visits the enchanted wood, he arrives at last at a place where there is a myrtle of gigantic size, surrounded by a great number of less elevated and apparently subject trees. During all this time he hears a strange celestial harmony, and on a sudden each of the trees opens, and discloses a nymph of wonderful beauty. All of these, to the number of an hundred, form in a circle, and dancing round the myrtle and the hero, sing with the most tuneful accents the following verses:—

All hail! and welcome to this pleasing grove,
 Armida's hope, the treasure of her love!
 Coms't thou (oh long expected!) to relieve
 The painful wounds the darts of absence give?
 This wood, that frown'd so late with horrid shade,
 Where pale despair her mournful dwelling made,
 Behold at thy approach reviv'd appears!
 At thy approach a gentler aspect wears.

Thus they—low thunders from the myrtle rose,
 And straight the bark a cleft wide-opening shows.

This is the version of Mr Hoole, and, except in altering the *sweet melody* (which the original tells us issued from the myrtle before it rent) into *thunders*,

No. V.

(much less appropriately, it is evident, when a pleasurable scene is to be described,) he has translated very well. But we now come to a stanza, which both he and Fairfax have quite misunderstood, from not adverting to a passage of Plato. To shew this, it will be necessary to quote the original Italian.

Tale era il canto, e poi dal mirto uscìa
Un dolcissimo suono, e quel s'apria.

30

Già nel' aprir d'un rustico Sileno,
Meraviglie vedea l'antica etade;
Ma quel gran Mirto da l'aperto seno,
Imagini mostrò più belle, e rade;
Donna mostrò, ch'assimigliava à pieno
Nel falso aspetto, angelica beltade;
Rinaldo guata, e di veder gli è avviso
Le sembianze d'Armida, e'l dolce viso.

These verses are thus translated by Fairfax, if that may be called a translation which is a total misconception of the original.

This was their song, and after from it went,
First a sweet sound, and then the myrtle rent.

30

If antique times admir'd Silenus old,
That oft appear'd set on his lazy ass;
How would they wonder if they had behold
Such sights as from the myrtle high did pass?
Thence came a lady fair with locks of gold,
That like in shape, in face, and beauty was,
To sweet Armida; Rinaldo thinks he spies
Her gestures, smiles, and glances of her eyes.

The reader who peruses this passage, is at a loss to know what business Silenus (to whom Fairfax has gratuitously given his ass as a companion,) has to do in the scene, or how he could be suggested to the poet by the appearance

of Armida. Hoole has the same conception of the passage as his predecessor, No. V. but makes things rather worse, as will appear from his version.

In wonder wrapt, have ancient times survey'd }
 A rude Silenus, issuing from the shade; }
 A fairer form the teeming tree display'd : }
 A damsel thence appear'd, whose lovely frame
 Might equal beauties of celestial name ;
 On her Rinaldo fix'd his heedful eyes,
 And saw Armida's features with surprise.

Mr Hoole certainly pays Armida a very poor compliment in saying she was *fairer* than a *rude Silenus*, and must have considered Rinaldo as not very difficult in the article of beauty. Lastly, Mr Doyne, who has published a translation of the *Jerusalem Delivered* in blank verse, thus interprets the passage :

————— This their song,
 Then from the myrtle came the sweetest sound,
 And then it rent. Not now appear'd in sight
 Rustic Silenus, in his semblance strange,
 The gaze of ancient ages ; but a form
 Lovely, and rare ; that from the wondrous trunk
 Of that enchanted myrtle came ; and like
 It was, in angel beauty, shape, and looks,
 To fond Armida ; her Rinaldo thinks
 He sees in every gesture, and fair smile.

The following is a literal translation of the stanza : “ The ancients heretofore have, upon the opening of a rustic Silenus, seen wonders—But this great myrtle shewed, from its divided bosom, images more rare and beautiful—It shewed a lady who, in her deceitful aspect, resembled, to the full, angelic beauty—Rinaldo looks, and it appears to him that he sees the semblance of Armida, and her sweet features.”

Towards the end of the Symposium of Plato, Alcibiades, contrasting the rude appearance of Socrates with the divine sentiments which he uttered, tells him he resembles those hollow statues of Satyrs and Sileni, which the Athenians made use of to contain their most exquisite perfumes ; or the most per-

No. V. fect statues of their divinities. It was their custom, as we learn from this passage of Plato, to enclose those beautiful statues in images of Sileni, for the purpose of preserving them, and partly, perhaps, to set off, by contrast, the wonderful grace of the included divinity. Σιληνοὶ Ἀλκιβιάδου. “Sileni Alcibiadis (says Erasmus, *Adagia*, p. 1670, ed. 1599,) apud eruditos, in proverbium abiisse videntur—quo licebit uti de re quae cū in speciem, et prima quod aiunt fronte, vilis ac ridicula videatur, tamen interius ac propius contemplanti, sit admirabilis—Aiunt enim Silenos imagiunculas quaspiam fuisse sectiles, et ita factas ut diduci et explicari possent, et quae clausae ridiculam ac monstrosam tibicinis speciem habebant, apertae subitò numen ostendebant, ut artem sculptoris gratiorem jocosus faceret error,” &c.

We have now attained a complete knowledge of the passage; and it appears, that the comparison has wonderful propriety. The verses of Tasso may be translated in the following manner:—

Such was the song—but forth the myrtle sent
Melodious murmurs; and at last it rent.

30

Oft a Silenus' breast, the days of old
Have seen uncloze—and yield some goddess fair;
But never yet did sylvan image hold
Such charms as issued from this myrtle rare:
Forth came a youthful maid, with locks of gold,
With angel beauty, angel grace, and air.
Rinaldo on the vision fix'd his eyes,
And saw Armida's features with surprise.

No. VI.—P. 117.

OF THE DISCOURSES ON HEROIC POETRY.

OF the *Discourses on Heroic Poetry* there seem to have been four,* only three of which have been printed. Though composed at the age of twenty and published without the knowledge and corrections of their author, they are exceedingly valuable; and, while they display a most refined taste, discover also much metaphysical acuteness, and geometrical precision. Indeed, I am more and more of opinion, that what Mr Stewart says of Burns, is true in general of every great poetical genius. “All the faculties of Burns’s mind (says he) were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition.”†

No. VI.

Of these Discourses I intended to give some analysis; but they are written with such condensation of thought, that, to give a proper idea of them, an almost complete translation would be necessary. The first of them is occupied with the matter; the second with the form; the third with the embellishments suited to a perfect heroic poem. Tasso seems to have considered, as of the very highest moment, the *materia nuda*, or subject chosen; and he places, in the same degree of importance, the form or poetical disposition of this matter. Indeed, the philosophic critics of that day appear to have considered the *design* of a poem as of still greater importance than its colouring; and the notions of our poet himself on this subject were uncommonly strict. Perhaps the critics of those times carried their ideas of unity, connection, and verisimilitude too far;

* *Opér.* vol. V. pp. 345, 514. How much Tasso himself esteemed these Discourses, appears from the following passage of a letter to Scipio Gonzaga: “Io ho molte composizioni, che desidero di pubblicare; ma eccetuatone la Gerusalemme, non fo di alcun altra maggiore stima, che di que libri, che Io scrissi a V. S. Illustriss. dell’artificio poetico.”—Vol. IX. p. 428.

† Burns’s *Works*, vol. I. p. 140. See also, in the same volume, some excellent remarks by Dr Currie on this subject, p. 239, 3d ed.

No. VI. but, upon the whole, their sentiments were calculated to do less harm than an opinion which of late has gained considerable credit,—that design, connection, and probability are only secondary objects of the poet's care. One of the first, as well as most distinguished, supporters of this doctrine was Mr Hume, who, however, in the instance I am now to specify, had an object to serve. In a letter (for the purpose of recommending the *Epigoniad*) to the authors of the *Critical Review*, published in that journal for April, 1759, this writer remarks, “ That the execution of the *Epigoniad* is better than the design; the poetry superior to the fable; and the colouring of the particular parts more excellent than the general plan of the whole. Of all the great epic poems which have been the admiration of mankind, (continues he) the *Jerusalem* of Tasso alone would make a tolerable novel, if reduced to prose, and related without that splendour of versification and imagery by which it is supported; yet, in the opinion of many able judges, the *Jerusalem* is the least perfect of all these productions, chiefly because it has least nature and simplicity in the sentiments, and is most liable to the objection of affectation and conceit. The story of a poem, whatever may be imagined, is the least essential part of it; the force of versification, the vivacity of the images, the justness of the descriptions, the natural play of the passions, are the chief circumstances which distinguish the great poet from the prosaic novelist, and give him so high a rank among the heroes in literature: and I will venture to affirm, that all these advantages are to be found, in an eminent degree, in the *Epigoniad*.”

A doctrine of the very same kind is supported in the following manner by the author of the *Life of Lope de Vega*. “ The chief objects of poetry (says Lord Holland) are to delineate strongly the characters and passions of mankind, to paint the appearances of nature, and to describe their effects upon our sensations. To accomplish those ends, the versification must be smooth, the language pure and impressive, and the images just, natural, and appropriate; our interest should be excited by the nature of the subject, and kept up by the spirit of the narration. The probability of the story, the connection of the tale, the regularity of the design, are indeed beauties; but beauties which are ornamental rather than necessary, which have often been attained by persons who had no poetical turn whatever, and as often neglected by those whose genius

and productions have placed them in the first rank in the province of poetry. Novels and comedies derive, indeed, a great advantage from an attention to these niceties, but in the higher branches of invention, they are the less necessary, because the justness of the imitation of passions inherent in the general nature of man, depends less upon the probability of the situations, than of manners and opinions resulting from the accidental and temporary forms of society."

In a great and serious poetical work, however, the plan and symmetry of parts is perhaps more essential to production of effect, than seems here to be allowed by Mr Hume, and by the noble critic. Much is owing to the *force du sujet*; and the selection of a fine subject, its natural conduct and progression, has a prodigious effect in warming the genius and fertilizing the ideas of the poet.* In the reader it adds to the emotions of sympathy, the pleasure derived from the perception of skill and order. Perhaps the two works in the Italian and English languages, which contain the greatest quantity of poetical materials, are the *Adone* of Marino, and the *Faerie Queen* of Spenser. These works, however, have never been favourites of the public; a circumstance which must be owing to the unskillful manner in which these materials are employed. I am of opinion, too, that to form a combination of events, which shall at once be new and credible; to carry them on with nature and probability, and delight the fancy without offending reason, is a still more difficult task than to embellish them with description and sentiment. In a sister art, the magic colouring of Rubens often dazzles so much as to make the defects of his design be overlooked; but Raphael is, nevertheless, the first of painters.

It is proper to remark, with regard to Tasso's *Discourses on Heroic Poetry*, that Sperone having learned that his young friend had written a work of this kind, addressed to Scipio Gonzaga, he gave some pretty broad hints, or rather openly pretended, that the remarks contained in it were his own; and that Tasso was a plagiarist. That our poet had been greatly indebted to the acute

* See a remark of Voltaire on the subject of *Zaïre*, p. 177.

No. VI. observations of this very ingenious writer, cannot be denied, and he pays him a very high compliment in the first of these *Discourses*: “Mi ricordo (says Tasso) in questo proposito, avere udito dire allo Sperone, la cui privata camera mentre Io in Padova studiava, era solito di frequentare non meno spesso, e volentieri che le pubbliche scuole, parendomi, che mi rappresentasse la sembianza di quella Accademia, e di quel Liceo, in cui i Socrati, e i Platoni avevano in uso di disputare; mi ricordo, dico, d’avere udito da lui, che il nostro Poeta Latino è più simile al Greco Oratore, che al Greco Poeta, e’l nostro Latino Oratore ha maggior conformità col Poeta Greco, che coll’ Orator Greco.” * That Tasso, however, did not derive from Sperone any *system* of poetical doctrine appears manifestly from the great diversity, and almost contradiction, which subsists between the principles in the *Discourses* of the former, and those which are supported in the works of the latter.

No. VII.—P. 119.

OF GUARINI.

No. VII. *Buttista Guarini*, of whom the *Pastor fido* is so celebrated, was born at Ferrara, in 1537. Little is known of his first studies; but, at an early period of his life, he was, during some years, professor of belles lettres in his native city. At the age of thirty, he entered into the service of the Duke of Ferrara, who honoured him with the title of Cavalier, and employed him as ambassador to different Italian princes and states. Two several times he was sent (very much against his will) to Poland; to the throne of which Alphonso II. of Ferrara aspired, after the abdication of Henry III. In 1585, the duke named Guarini secretary of state, an employment which, being disgusted with his situation, he retained only two years. He tells us, in one of his letters, (*Lettere di B. Guarini*, p. 59, 1615, in 8vo,) that it was not for want of smiles and promises, (if these could have contented him,) that he left Ferrara; but he found, after

* *Oper.* vol. V. p. 498.

sixteen years of service, that he was acquiring neither honour nor profit; and he adds, that for a slave he was too free, and for a freeman too much a slave. He had before quitted the service of Alphonso, and, at this new dereliction, that prince was exceedingly enraged. From a letter of Coccapani, steward of the duke, (dated July 1st, 1588, and which is quoted by Tiraboschi, *Storia della Letteratura d'Italia*, tom. IX. p. 180,) it would appear that Guarini had fled secretly, and by night, from Ferrara. "I was stupified," says Coccapani, "when I beheld this folly, and it was my opinion that he was falling into the condition of Tasso." At Turin he had an honourable office assigned him, and his pastoral was, for the first time, represented in a splendid manner. The persecution of Alphonso, however, forced him to leave that city, and betake himself to Venice; where, in February, 1589, he published an apology. After spending some time in this city, and at Padua, he was invited to Mantua by its duke, in 1593. Alphonso, however, signified to that prince, that he would consider it as a very high obligation if he would not employ Guarini in his service; and that he would explain, at meeting, the reason of this request. Fortunately for the poet his persecutor died soon afterward, and he passed into the service of the Grand Duke Ferdinand. The marriage of one of his sons with a lady of unequal rank, an union to which he suspected the duke had consented, induced Guarini to leave that court in disgust. He next entered into the service of the Duke of Urbino; but he soon became dissatisfied, from an idea that he was not sufficiently distinguished. His death happened at Venice (where he had gone to manage some law-suits) in the year 1612.

This poet was of an extremely restless and unhappy temper; a great part of his life was spent in law-suits, first with his father, and afterward with his own children. His friends and patrons were the same with those of Tasso; and he does not seem to have enjoyed a much greater share of happiness than his rival poet. "Chi vide," says he in one of his letters, "fortuna più della mia cattiva? .. patisco quello innocente ch'a malfattori si da per pena." One of the principal sources of his misery was the violent attacks which were made on his *Pastor fido*, by a numerous swarm of critics, immediately on its publication. In the first scene of the fifth act of this pastoral, Guarini gives, under the name of Carino, an account of his life, and the hardships he had undergone; and he draws a most frightful picture of the court of Ferrara.

No. VII.

Gente di nome, e di parlar cortese
 Ma d'opre scarsa, e di pietà nemica;
 Gente placida in vista, e mansueta,
 Ma più del cupo mar tumida e fera;
 Gente sol d'apparenza, in cui se miri
 Viso di carità, mente d'invidia
 Poi trovi, e'n dritto sguardo animo bieco,
 E minor fede alhor, che più lusinga.
 Quel, ch'altrove è virtù, è qui difetto.
 Dir vero, oprar non torto, amar non finto,
 Pietà sincera, inviolabil fede,
 E di core, e di man vita innocente,
 Stiman d'animo vil, di basso ingegno,
 Sciochezza, e vanità degno di riso.
 L'ingannare, il mentir, la frode, il furto,
 E la rapina di pietà vestita,
 Crescer col danno, e precipitio altrui,
 E far a se d'altrui biasmo honore
 Son le virtù di quella gente infida.
 Non merto, non valor, non riverenza
 Nè d'età, nè di grado, nè di legge,
 Non freno di vergogna : non rispetto
 Nè d'amor, nè di sangue, non memoria
 Di ricevuto ben ; ne finalmente
 Cosa sì venerabile, o sì santa
 O sì giusta esser può, ch'a quella vasta
 Cupidigia d' honori, a quella ingorda
 Fame d'havere inviolabil sia.
 Hor' Io, ch' incauto, e di lor arti ignaro
 Sempre mi vissi, e portai scritto in fronte
 Il mio pensiero, e disvelato il core,
 Tu puoi pensar s'à non sospetti strali
 D'invida gente fui scoperto segno.

Such was the dreadful scene into which Tasso, (with a character precisely the same as that described in the five last verses,) entered, at the age of twenty-one. Nor, though evidently drawn in a moment of disgust, is it probable that the tints of the picture are unjustifiably gloomy. It is remarked by Serassi, that the court of Ferrara seems to have been extremely dangerous, especially to literary men. Not to mention Tasso and Guarini, the celebrated Panigar-

ola was banished suddenly from that city with much indignity ; and several other distinguished men were constrained to depart by persecution and neglect. No. VII.

Bevenuto Cellini, who resided some months at Ferrara, about twenty-five years before Tasso, gives a very unfavourable account of the conduct of the courtiers, and of the morality of the people in general. He tells us, that, having executed an ingenious piece of work for the duke, that prince ordered a diamond ring, of above two hundred crowns value, to be given him, which was changed by the treasurer into one not worth twelve. "The gentry of Ferrara," says he, "are not only exceedingly avaricious, but rapacious after the property of others, and endeavour to get possession of it by every expedient they can think of. This is the general character of them all."—Vol. II. p. 46. Nugent's *Translation*.

No. VIII.—P. 122.

OF THE FAMILY OF ESTE.

The best work relative to the family of Este, is the *Antichità Estensi*, of Muratori, which Gibbon justly pronounces to be a "model of genealogical criticism." It is in two volumes folio, the first of which is dedicated to George I. of Great Britain, who united with Rinaldo, Duke of Modena, in encouraging the author to this undertaking. This first volume was printed in 1717, but the publication of the second took place only in 1740. The illustrious Leibnitz employed some years of his life, and travelled into Italy for the purpose of composing a history of the House of Brunswick, a collateral, or rather descendant from that of Este; and though his work was never completed, much use was made of his papers in the *Origines Guelficæ*, compiled by Ecard, and published in five folio volumes. The English reader, however, may be satisfied with a perusal of Gibbon's *Antiquities of the House of Brunswick*, in the second volume of his *Miscellaneous Works*. No. VIII.

The support given to literature by the family of Este, began at a very early

No. VIII. period, and continued unimpaired during several ages. From a document translated from the Provençal, by Muratori [*Ant. Est.* tom. ii. p. 11.] it appears that Azzo VII. Marquis of Este, who ruled 1216-1264, was a great encourager of Provençal poetry; that there was a frequent concourse of Troubadours at his court; and that one Maestro Ferrari, whom he patronised, was by all of them, at that period, considered as their chief. Godeva (says Tiraboschi) di averli sovente alla sua corte, e rendeva lor' quell'onore, che a lor talenti, e a loro studj credeva doversi, dando con ciò a gloriosi suoi successori i primi esempj di quella splendida munificenza con cui essi, in ogni età, hanno avvivate e protette le lettere, e i letterati. Quindi non e meraviglia, se di lui e delle principesse di lui figlie, si parla spesso con lode da Provenzali.*

The house of Este was no favourite of Dante, who happened to be of a different political party. Accordingly, in the xiith canto of his *Inferno*, he places *suo more* the Marquis Obizzo II. (who ruled 1264--1298) in hell amongst others of the Guelphine faction. "This," says Muratori, "seems to have been from no demerit in that prince; and to a poet who was in his heart so fierce a Ghibellin, little credit should be given when he speaks of Obizzo, who was a great favourer of the Guelphs. I have seen (continues he) a manuscript discourse of our celebrated Alexander Tassoni, in which he confutes this improbable calumny of Dante."† This is not the only passage of Dante's poem in which his ill-will to the family of Este breaks forth, and his displeasure at its princes seems to have extended to Ferrara itself, which he asserts had never produced a poet. The assertion is disproved by Tiraboschi, and had it been just never was a reproach so compleatly done away.

Dante, therefore, cannot be numbered among the poets who enjoyed the patronage, and shared the munificence of the house of Este, but it was otherwise with the second father of Italian literature. Beccatelli, archbishop of Ragusa, tells us, in his life of Petrarch, that the lords of Este were friends and patrons of that wonderful man. "I signori da Este Marchesi di Ferrara furono suoi amorevolessimi, ed a loro non solo lettere, ma libri di grandi opere

* *Storia*, &c. vol. i. p. 37. Ed. Mathias.

† *Ant. Est.* vol. ii. p. 39.

ha scritto." If we were still to trace them downwards, we should in every age observe the same propensity to literature, a propensity which even the ladies of the family introduced into the houses of which they became members. No. VIII.

Of Niccolò III. (who ruled 1393-1451,) Muratori says, *Portò egli secondo l'uso della casa d'Este un singolare amore alle lettere, e a i letterati, molte de' quali con grossi premj tirò a Ferrara, e massimamente Guarino Veronese, che per testimonianza d' Enea Silvio fu Padre e Maestro della maggior parte di coloro che si diedero in que' tempi a coltivar le lettere Greche in Italia.* * Lionello, son of this prince, composed very elegantly in Latin, and patronized Theodore Gaza, George of Trebisond, Lorenzo Valla, and Nicholas and Titus Strozzi.

Borso, first *Duke* of Ferrara and Modena, (1451--1471,) surpassed in magnificence all his predecessors, and, with the exception of Alphonso, the patron of Tasso, perhaps all his successors. Of this pompous magnificence many instances are enumerated by Muratori.† *Erat praeterea (says a contemporary writer) divinarum humanarum que literarum egregiè doctus, et eam ob rem doctorum virorum amantissimus habebatur, et eos undecumque haberi possent, suo in Gymnasio ad se convocavit.*

Hercules I. *Duke* of Ferrara (1471--1505,) caused plays, principally translated from Plautus by himself and others, to be acted with prodigious magnificence, and these, according to Muratori, were the first plays acted in modern Italy.‡ Of the splendour of Hercules, and his great fondness of theatrical representations, several instances are recorded by this writer.¶ At his court the celebrated Boiardo, Anthony Tebaldeo, Batista Guarino the elder, Titus and Hercules Strozzi, and other distinguished writers, flourished and were patronised.

The son of this prince, Alphonso I. was engaged in almost continual wars with the Venetians, and with the Pontiffs Julius II. and Leo X. For many years, likewise, he was deprived of two of his principal cities, Modena and Reggio, so that what money he had was necessarily expended rather on soldiers than the sciences. As soon, however, as he respired from his long and

* *Ant. Est.* vol. ii. p. 201.

† *Ant. Est.* vol. ii. p. 252.

+ *Ant. Est.* vol. ii. pp. 209, 212, 218, 219, 225.

¶ *Ant. Est.* pp. 253, 278.

No. VIII. grievous wars, he turned his attention to the support of literature. His court was adorned by the immortal Ariosto, whom he employed in many important functions, treated as a friend, and rewarded as a favourite.* The brother of Alphonso, Cardinal Ippolito, was much devoted to mathematics and astronomy.† This, in the opinion of Tiraboschi, explains his question to Ariosto, “Where the devil, Master Lodovico, did you pick up so many fooleries,” if indeed that question was ever put, or at least ever put seriously and in a contemptuous manner.

Hercules II. son and successor of Alphonso I. was not only a great promoter of literature, but is celebrated by Ariosto as one of the most cultivated poets of his time.‡ He invited to Ferrara a great number of literary men, and his attention to learning is testified by many dedications: “Quem alium Patro- num (says Palingenius, in the dedicatory epistle of his *Zodiacus Vitae* to this prince) in tota Italia invenire possum cui musae cordi sunt? qui carmen sibi oblatum aut intelligat, aut examine recto expendere sciat.” His duchess Renée, daughter of Lewis XII. of France was not only profoundly skilled in Greek and Latin, but was a most sweet and affable favourer of the learned.|| Nor was the brother of Hercules, Cardinal Ippolito II. a less munificent protector of literature, as is evident from many eulogies of Muretus and others.§

We have now reached the times of Alphonso II. the patron of Tasso, and

* Ariosto, *Satir.* vii. *Ant. Est.* ii. p. 363. Tiraboschi, *Storia*, &c. tom. vii. part I. p. 34

† Di Filosofi altrove, e di Poeti
Si vede in mezzo un' onorata squadra;
Quel gli dipinge il corso de' Pianeti,
Questi la terra, quello il ciel gli squadra:
Questi meste elegie, quel versi lieti
Quel canta Heroici, ô qualche oda leggiadra.

Orlan. Fur. xlv. stan. 92.

‡ Canto xxvii, stanza 13.

|| Tiraboschi, *Storia* vii. part I. p. 37. *Ant. Est.* II. p. 389. *Life of Tasso*, p. 129.

§ Muretus, *Varia Lectiones*, lib. xvi. cap. 4. *Epist.* lib. I. 23. Ubert Folietta *Opusc.* p. 67.

from this short sketch, it will be evident that no family whatever had so long and so uniformly patronised learning, or has perhaps merited so well the compliment which Justus Lipsius pays to the Medici : “ *Stirps quasi fataliter nata, ad instauranda vel fovenda studia.*” After the loss of Ferrara, the family of Este, then only Dukes of Modena, and long oppressed, had much less power to patronise literature and the arts. That this was done, however, to a considerable extent, appears from Tiraboschi, *Storia*, &c. VIII. p. 18, &c. Muratori *Ant. Est.* vol. II. cap. 16, 17, 18. The patronage, indeed, bestowed by the family of Modena on the two illustrious writers, to whom I am now referring, proves at once the perseverance of the princes of that house in this generous virtue ; and is another instance of their felicity in having selected, as subjects of their protection, persons in whose gratitude posterity partake.

In fine, it ought not to be omitted, in speaking of the princes of Este, that, in ages the most corrupted, and in a country the most debauched, of which history gives an account, they stand pre-eminent for their virtues among those of the other Italian families. If we except one unfortunate incident in the year 1425, and one cruel act of Cardinal Ippolito I. * their story does not present a single inhuman or unholy deed. We find in it none of those rapes, murders, oppressions ; none of those conspiracies, seditions, and rebellions among their subjects, which present themselves at almost every page of the annals of the other contemporary princes of Italy. Thus, while they excelled every other family in their long continued patronage of literature ; the princes of the house of Este, surpassed them also in the still higher graces of veneration for religion, and the cultivation of virtue.

* *Ant. Est.* II. pp. 190, 280.

No. IX.—P. 132.

EXPLANATION OF A PASSAGE IN THE JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

No. IX. I have remarked (p. 132, note,) that Tasso alludes to the marriage of Anne of Este with the Duke of Guise, in an important passage of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, which has hitherto been unexplained by any commentator. Of this passage, Serassi makes a very courtly use in the dedication of his work to Mary Beatrice of Este, spouse of the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria. After mentioning the patronage which Tasso had received from the princes of her family, and his celebration of her ancestors in such a manner, that no other house, except that of Augustus, had received so precious an offering of literary incense, he thus proceeds :

“ This great connection, however, of all that concerns our poet with the princes of Este, is not the only motive which has induced me to dedicate this work to your royal highness, and to hope, from the greatness of your most gentle mind, an affable reception. Other and more particular reasons have urged me, and they are such, that I should deem myself both to have failed in a manifest duty, and to have done a most grievous injury to the memory of my great Tasso, if I had not desired that this history (of whatever value it may be,) should behold the light, under the favourable shade of your most venerated name. It is known to every one, that, in the august marriage of your highness with the Royal Archduke Ferdinand, the blood of the two principal heroes of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, that is, of Godfrey, Duke of Lorraine, and of Rinaldo of Este, has been united. But no one perhaps has observed, that, two ages ago, these most propitious nuptials were foreseen, and announced by our Tasso; and that he makes evident mention of them in his incomparable poem. If your highness will deign to look into the fourteenth canto of the *Jerusalem*, you will see that the port represents Hugo as appearing to his friend Godfrey in a dream. This is for the purpose of signifying to that lea-

der, that it was the will of God that he should recal to the army the brave No. 1A.
Rinaldo, as being the elect of heaven, for the sovereign accomplishment of
its councils; and, after many reasons adduced for this purpose, he concludes
by announcing the union which would afterwards take place between their
houses.

SARA' IL TUO SANGUE AL SUO COMMISTO, E DEVI
PROGENIE USCIRNE GLORIOSA E CHIARA. *

“ The commentators of our poet (continues Serassi,) deserve to be pardoned, if none of them has understood and explained this most important passage; since, in their times, the prediction had not yet been accomplished. But it is my happy fortune to be the first to explain it to the world, and, at the same time, to congratulate your royal highness and Italy, on the felicity which is predicted to both in your glorious descendants. And, in truth, if the prophecy of the poet has been already fulfilled in that part of it which seemed the most remote and difficult, there is no reason to doubt that its accomplishment will be compleat.”

Desirous as I am, both that as many claims to admiration should unite in the person of Tasso, and that as many heroes should arise at present in the house of Austria as possible, I confess, I think not much is to be founded on the above-cited passage. The families of Este and of Lorraine had already been united in the marriage of Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, and Anne of Este; and Tasso evidently, in the above passage, wishes to compliment that lady and the three young princes her sons. “ The house of Lorraine, (says Davila,) from which are descended the Lords of Guise, refers its origin to times the most remote. It numbers amongst its progenitors in the male line, Godfrey of Bulloigne; he who was captain of the Christian host, at the re-

* Can. XIV. st. 19.

His blood shall mix with thine, and thence a race
Of glorious names succeeding times shall grace.

HOOLE.

No. IX. covery of the holy sepulchre, and who, by his arms and piety, acquired in Asia the kingdom of Jerusalem." * This, therefore, is the explanation of the passage, and that it is the just one, appears also from the circumstance, that Tasso greatly admired that aspiring family. " Why says he, (in a letter written at the time, when he was first confined in the hospital of St Anne,) why am I not favoured by the glorious Princes of Guise, whom I have always so much loved and honoured, and in particular, by the Duke of Mayenne, of whom I kissed the hand. And if they who have performed, and who every day perform, heroic deeds, and worthy of eternal memory, if they do not favour writers, who ought to do so ?" †

The prediction of the glorious race, which was to spring from the inter-marriage of the families of Godfrey and Rinaldo, does not appear in Tasso's altered work, the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*. The two elder sons of the Duchess Anne had then been assassinated by the command of Henry III. and, at any rate, our poet was now disgusted with the family of Este, and with all its connections.

No. X.—P. 136.

LA PRIMA DI TRE SORELLE SCRITTE A MADAMA LEONORA DA ESTE MIA SINGULARISSIMA PADRONA E BENEFATTRICE, PUB. GEN. 1567.

No. X.

Mentre, ch'a venerar muovon le genti
 Il tuo bel nome in mille carte accolto,
 Quasi in celeste tempio idol celeste;
 E mentre, ch' ha la Fama il mondo volto

* La casa di Loreno, dalla quale discendono i Signori di Guisa riferendo l'origine sua in antichissimi tempi, numera nella linea mascolina fra i suoi progenitori Gottifredo Buglione, quello, che capitano delle genti Christiane alla ricuperazione del Santo Sepolcro si acquistò nell' Asia con la pietà, e con l'armi il Regno di Gerusalemme.—Libro I.

† *Opere*, vol. X. p. 379. see too *ibid.* p. 183, and a sonnet to the young Duke of Guise, *Mentre d'antichi*, &c. vol. VI. p. 208.

A contemplarti, e mille fiamme ardenti
 D'immortal lode in tua memoria ha deste,
 Deh non sdegnar, ch'anch' io te canti, e'n queste
 Mie basse rime volontaria scendi,
 Nè sia l'albergo lor da te negletto
 Ch'anco sott' umil tetto
 S'adora Dio, cui d'assemblarti intendi;
 Nè sprezza il puro affetto
 Di chi sacrar face mortal gli suole,
 Benchè splenda in sua gloria eterno il Sole.
 Forse come talor candide, e pure
 Rende Apollo le nubi, e chiuso intorno
 Con lampi non men vaghi indi traluce,
 Così vedrassi il tuo bel nome adorno
 Splender per entro le mie rime oscure,
 E'l lor fosco illustrar colla sua luce :
 E forse anco per se tanto riluce,
 Ch'ov' altri in parte non l'asconda, e tempre
 L'infinita virtù de' raggi sui,
 Occhio non fia, che'n lui
 Fiso mirando non s'abbagli, e stempre ;
 Onde, perch' ad altrui
 Col suo lume medesimo ei non si celi,
 Ben dei soffrir, ch'io sì l'adombri, e veli.
 Nè spiaceri anco dee, che solo in parte
 Sia tua beltà ne' miei colori espressa
 Dallo stil, ch'a tant' opra audace move ;
 Perocchè, s'alcun mai, quale in te stessa
 Sei, tal ancor ti ritraesse in carte,
 Chi mirare oseria forme sì nove,
 Senza volger per tema i lumi altrove?
 O chi mirando folgorar gli sguardi
 Degli occhi ardenti, e lampeggiar il riso,
 E'l bel celeste viso
 Quinci e quindi avventar fiammelle, e dardi,
 Non rimarria conquiso ?
 Bench' egli prima in ogni rischio audace
 Non temesse d'Amor l'arco, e la face.
 E certo il primo di che'l bel sereno
 Della tua fronte agli occhi miei s'offerse
 E vidi armato spaziarvi Amore,
 Se non che riverenza allor converse,

No. X.

E Meraviglia in fredda selce il seno,
 Ivi peria con doppia morte il core.
 Ma parte degli strali, e dell' ardore
 Sentii pur anco entro'l gelato marmo:
 E s'alcun mai per troppo ardire ignudo
 Vien di quel forte scudo,
 Ond'io innanzi a te mi copro, ed armo,
 Sentirà'l colpo crudo
 Di tai saette, ed arso al fatal lume
 Giacerà con Fetonte entro'l tuo fiume.
 Che per quanto talor discerne, e vede
 De' secreti di Dio terrena mente,
 Che da Febo rapita al ciel sen voli;
 Provvidenza di Giove ora consente,
 Ch' interno duol con sì pietose prede
 Le sue bellezze al tuo bel corpo involi;
 Che se l'ardor de' duo' sereni Soli
 Non era scemo, e'nticpidito il foco,
 Che nelle guancie sovra'l gel si sparse,
 Incenerite ed arse
 Morian le genti, e non v'avea più loco
 Di riverenza armarse;
 E ciò, che'l fato pur minaccia, allora
 In faville converso il mondo fora.
 Ond' ci, che prega il ciel, che nel tuo stato
 Più vago a lui ti mostri, e ch'omai spieghi
 La tua beltà, che'n parte ascosa or tiene,
 Come incauto non sa, che ne' suoi preghi
 Non chiede altro, che morte. E ben il fato
 Di Semele infelice or mi sovviene
 Che'l gran Giove veder delle terrene
 Forme ignude bramò, come de' suoi
 Nembi e fulmini cinto in sen l'accoglie
 Chi gli e sorella, e moglie;
 Ma sì gran luce non sostenne poi;
 Anzi sue belle spoglie
 Cenere fersi, e nel suo caso reo
 Nè Giove stesso a lei giovar poteo.
 Ma che? forse sperar anco ne lice,
 Che sebben donò, ond'arda, e si consumi,
 Tenta impetrar con mille preghi il mondo;
 Potrà poi anco al Sol de duo' bei lumi

Rinnovellarsi in guisa di Fenice,
 E rinascere più vago, e più giocondo,
 E quanto ha del terreno, e dell' immondo
 Tutto spogliando, più leggiadre forme
 Vestirsi : e ciò par, ch'a ragion si spere
 Da quelle luci ariere,
 Ch' esser dee l'opra alla cagion conforme,
 Nè già si puon temere
 Da beltà sì divina effetti rei,
 Che vital e'l morir, se vien da lei.
 Canzon, deh sarà mai quel lieto giorno,
 Che'n que' begli occhi le lor fiamme prime
 Raccese Io veggia, e ch'arda il mondo in loro ?
 Ch' ivi, qual foco l'oro,
 Anch'io purgherei l'alma : e le mie rime
 Foran d'angel canoro,
 Ch'or son vili, e neglette, se non quanto
 Costei *Le onora* col bel nome santo.

The above canzone, though containing beautiful passages, is upon the whole a very perfect specimen of what the French call *Phebus*. As it was published in January, 1567, it must have been written soon after Tasso's arrival at Ferrara, and I have placed it here as a kind of picture of his sentiments towards Leonora at this period. In any other country one would consider the canzone as symptomatic rather of gallantry than of love; but it has been very justly remarked by Mad. de Staël, that, while in Italy, love is a profound sentiment, the expression of it is generally a refined and metaphysical language; and, it may be added, a tissue, frequently, of glaring images and far-fetched conceits. "En général (she makes an Italian say,) quoique notre poésie ait été consacrée à chanter l'amour, je hasarderai de dire que nous avons plus de profondeur et de sensibilité dans la peinture de toutes les autres passions que dans celle-là. A force de faire des vers amoureux, on s'est créé à cet égard parmi nous un langage convenu, et ce n'est pas ce qu'on a éprouvé, mais ce qu'on a lu qui sert d'inspiration aux poètes. L'amour tel qu'il existe en Italie ne ressemble nullement à l'amour tel que nos écrivains le peignent. . . . Nos Poètes subtilisent et exagèrent le sentiment, tandis que le véritable caractère de l'amour Italien, c'est une impression rapide et profonde, qui s'exprimerait

No. X.

bien plutôt par des actions silencieuses et passionnées que par un ingénieux langage." *

This canzone to the Princess of Ferrara, was composed, it appears, either during her sickness, or while she was beginning to be convalescent. I have remarked, that Göethe has written a play, entitled *Torquato Tasso*, and has commended the passage in which Tasso describes his emotions at first seeing Leonora. This passage I shall here subjoin.

Leonore. Zum erstenmal trat Ich, noch unterstützt
 Von meinen Frauen, aus dem krankenzimmer,
 Da kam Lukretia voll frohen lebens
 Herbey und führte dich an ihrer hand.
 Du warst der erste, der in neuen leben
 Mir neu und unbekannt entgegen trat.
 Da hofft' Ich viel für dich und mich, auch hat
 Uns bis hierher die hoffnung nicht betrogen.

Tasso. Und Ich, der Ich betäubt von dem Gewimmel
 Des drängendes Gewühls, von so viel glanz
 Geblendet, und von mancher leidenschaft
 Bewegt, durch stille gänge des Pallasts
 An deiner schwester seite schweigend ging,
 Dann in das Zimmer trat, wo Du uns bald
 Auf deine Frau'n gelehnt ershienest—mir
 Welch ein moment war dieser! O! vergib!
 Wie den Bezauberten von Rausch und Wahn
 Der Gottheit nähe leicht und willig heilt;
 So war auch Ich von aller Phantasie,
 Von ieder sucht, von iedem falschen triebe
 Mit einem blick in deinen Blick geheilt.
 Wenn unerfahren die Begierde sich
 Nach tausend Gegenständen sonst verlor,
 Trat Ich beschämt zuerst in mich zurück,
 Und lernte nun das Wünschens werthe kennen.
 So sucht man in dem weiten sand des Meers
 Vergebens eine Perle, die verborgen
 In stillen schalen eingeschlossen ruht.

A. II. sc. I.

* *Corinne*, tom. I. p. 348.

APPENDIX.

No. X,

Leonora. Then first I saw thee, when the weary couch
Of sickness first I quitted—feeble yet,
And leaning, trembling, on my handmaid's arm ;
Forward Lucretia came, with mirthful glee,
And thee, a stranger, thee, as yet unknown,
Led by the hand ; and with thy presence dear
Hail'd and refresh'd my scarce-reviving life—
Blest was the omen—much I hop'd for both—
For thee and me ; nor has my hope been vain.

Tasso. I, too, I never shall forget the hour—
Lost mid the pressing crowd ; by empty pomp
Dazzled and blinded, (by the painful thought
Of self-abasement tortur'd, and the wish
For those vain trappings which my reason scorn'd,)
I pass'd through the proud palace, full of woe,
And drooping, silent, by thy sister's side,—
She led through still apartments, till we came
Where, leaning on thy handmaid, thou approach'd—
O ! what a moment ! Lady—oh forgive !—
As, when the Godhead comes, each hellish charm,
Each spell unholy passes from the soul :
So, at one glance of that angelic look,
One single glance, each phantasy inane,
Each poor ambition, every vain desire
Of vanity was lost—nor wander'd more
My warring thoughts ; but what was precious knew,
What to be wish'd, and what, at length to prize—
So, on the ocean's wide expanse of sand,
The pearl is vainly sought, which, hid from glare,
Sleeps in the bosom of its secret shell.

No. XI.—P. 159.

SONNET OF TASSO.

As the following sonnet is excepted from the number of those written for No. XI.
other persons, which Tasso wished to be destroyed in the event of his death in

No. XI. France, I have given it a place in the Appendix. The subject is a lady going to the country, of the name of Laura.

Or, che l'aura mia dolce altrove spira
 Fra selve, e campi : ah! ben di ferro ha'l core,
 Chi riman quì solingo, ove d'orrore
 E'cieca valle, di miseria, e d'ira.
 Quì nessun raggio di beltà si mira :
 Rustico è fatto, e co' bifolchi Amore
 Pasce gli Armenti, e'n sull' estivo ardore
 Or tratta il rastro, ed or la falce aggira.
 O fortunata selva! O liete piagge!
 Ove le fere, ove le piante, e i sassi
 Appreso han di valor senso e costume!
 Or che far non potea quel dolce lume,
 Se fa, d'ond' egli parte, ov' egli stassi,
 Civili i boschi, e le città selvagge?

It is not easy to perceive why Tasso preferred this above many other sonnets of his composition. The idea is derived from the following beautiful verses of Tibullus :

Rura tenent, Cornute, meam, villaeque puellam ;
 Ferreus, est Eheu ! quisquis in urbe manet.
 Ipsa Venus laetos jam nunc migravit in agros,
 Verbaque aratoris rustica discit Amor.

In his commentary on the last verse of his sonnet *Civili i boschi, e le città selvagge*, Tasso says, " This figure, in which the predicate implies a contradiction to the subject, is most beautifully used by our poets." Indeed, it seems to have been a favourite of our bard ; for, in his extended discourses on heroic poetry, he says, " Most beautiful also, and most ornate, are the adjuncts which imply contrariety and contradiction, as the following :

E dannoso guadagno, ed util danno,
 E gradi ove più scende, chi più sale,
 Stanco riposo, e riposato affanno.
 Chiaro d'snore, e gloria oscura, e-negra,
 Perfida lealtate, e fido inganno.

“This figure, (adds he,) is in a manner peculiar to the Tuscans, although very similar ones have been used by the Greeks and Latins, such are, ἀδωρα δῶρα, ἀγάμους γάμους, and the *insepulta sepultura* of Marcus Tully.” No. XI.

No. XII.—P. 173.

The following Latin poem of Tasso is not printed in his works, and as he exercised himself very little in this sort of composition, may be considered as curious. No. XII.

AD NUBES.

Neptuni genus humidæ
 Nubes, quæ volucris curritis agmine
 Qua cæci rapiunt Noti :
 E vestro gremio cum sonitu horrida
 Mittit fulmina Jupiter,
 Si quando in Superos gens fera verticem
 Tollit, si veteres manu
 Lucos sacrilega polluit ; hinc tonat
 Arx coeli, hinc micat ignibus
 Crebris. Vos placidæ frugiferos agris
 Imbres mittitis, et sata
 Laeta humore alitis. Vos sitientibus
 Succos vitibus additis,
 Mox libanda novis munera poculis.
 Vos largas pluviae nisi
 Effundatis opes, gramina non humus,
 Non flores dabit arida.
 Arescant viduæ frondibus arbores ;
 Vestri languida corpora
 Ex desiderio vix animas suo
 Languentes retinent sinu ;
 Vos in pinifero vertice, seu tenet
 Atlas, seu Scythiæ latus,
 Seu vasto oceani luditis æquore,
 Foetus imbriferos date ;
 Rores in gremium spargite torridæ

No. XII.

Matris munera, roscidae
 Nubes, vestro Pio fundite Maximo;
 Quaquam gentibus imperat,
 Non haec vestra Pius munera negliget;
 Tandem o vos requiem date
 Fessis irriguo rore animantibus.

No. XIII.—P. 177.

OF THE AMINTA.

No. XIII. As next to the *Jerusalem Delivered*, the *Aminta* is the strongest title which Tasso has to the admiration of posterity, it will be proper to dwell on it at some length. The story of this drama is extremely simple, and (with the exception of the introduction of the Satyr) is sufficiently natural. *Aminta*, a young shepherd is enamoured of *Sylvia*, a nymph of uncommon beauty, but who is very cruel, not from any particular aversion to him, but to love in general. In the first scene of the *first act*, *Daphne*, a sister nymph, in vain attempts to persuade *Sylvia* to become less rigid; and in the second, *Aminta* relates to *Tirsi*, the rise and ill success of his attachment. The act then concludes with a chorus of exquisite sweetness, which *Crescimbeni* declares to be singly worth the greater part of the compositions of Italian poetry.* It would seem that Tasso had been, at the time of writing it, under the influence of the most violent passion for some unattainable object. He bewails the obstacles which honour opposes to the gratification of mutual desire, and regrets the liberty, or unreprieved and innocent licence, of the golden age.†

* Il primo Coro solamente dell' *Aminta* vale gran parte di quanto in volgar Poesia composto si legge *Stor. Volg. Poes.* vol. II. p. 444.

† O bella età dell'oro
 Non già perchè di latte
 Sen corse il fiume, e stillò me le il bosco:
 Non perchè i frutti loro

Oh happy age of gold !
 Not that the stream did flow
 With milk, and honey still'd from every bough :
 Not that the serpent roll'd
 Innocuous, while the mold,
 Untouch'd by plough, did every fruit bestow :
 Not that no tempest cold
 Did rage, nor lightnings glow,
 And heaven laugh'd above, and earth below :
 Nor yet the peaceful pine,
 His mountain did resign,
 To bear mid waves, to other worlds the foe.
 But only for that name,
 That idle name of air,
 That Idol of deceit, that empty sound,
 That *Honour*, which became
 Parent of every care,
 And so torments our nature without bound,
 Was not yet vainly found ;
 Nor pour'd the gall of art
 Amid the sweet delight,
 Which crown'd each day, and night,
 Nor gave his hard laws to the free-born heart ;
 But nature rul'd, and nature did indite
 One single law—" What pleases, that is right."

Dier dall' aratro intatte
 Le terre, e gli angui errar senz'ira, o toscò :
 Non perchè nuvol fosco
 Non spiegò allor suo velo ;
 Ma in primavera eterna,
 Ch'ora s'accende, e verna,
 Rise di luce, e di sereno il cielo :
 Nè portò peregrino
 O guerra, o merce agli altrui lidi il pino.
 Ma sol, perchè quel vano
 Nome senza soggetto
 Quell' Idolo d'errori, Idol d'inganno :
 Quel che dal volgo insano
 Onor poscia fu detto,
 Che di nostra natura'l feo tiranno,
 Non mischiava il suo affanno
 Fra le liete dolcezze
 De l'amoroso gregge ;
 Nè fu sua dura legge
 Nota a quell'alme in libertate avvezze ;
 Ma legge aurea, e felice,
 Che natura scolpì " S'ei piace, ei liç."

No. XIII.

Allor tra fiori, e linfe,
 Traccean dolci carole
 Gli Amoretti senz'archi, e senza faci,
 Sedean Pastori, e Ninfe
 Meschiando alle parole
 Vezzi, e susurri, ed a i susurri i baci
 Strettamente tenaci:
 La verginella ignuda
 Scopria sue fresche rose
 Ch'or tien nel velo ascose,
 E le poma del seno, acerbe, e crude
 E spesso o in fiume, o in lago
 Scherzar si vide con l'amata il vago.

Tu prima, Onor, velasti
 La fonte de i diletti
 Negando l'onde all'amorosa sete.
 Tu a' begli occhi insegnasti
 Di starne in se ristretti,
 E tener lor bellezze altrui segrete
 Tu raccogliesti in rete
 Le chiome all'aura sparte: *
 Tu i dolci atti lascivi
 Festi ritrosi, e schivi:
 A i detti il fren ponesti, a i passi l'arte.
 Opra è tua sola O Onore
 Che furto sia quel che fu don d'Amore.

E son tuoi fatti egregi
 Le pene, e i pianti nostri,
 Ma tu; d'Amore, e di Natura donno,
 Tu domator de' regi,
 Che fai tra questi chiostrì
 Che la grandezza tua capir non ponno?
 Vattene, e turba il sonno
 Agl'illustri, e potenti:
 Noi quì negletta, e bassa
 Turba, senza te lassa
 Viver nell'uso dell' antiche genti.
 Amiam, che non ha tregua
 Con gli anni umana vita, e si dilegua:~
 Amiam; che'l Sol si muore, e poi rinasce:
 A noi sua breve luce
 S'asconde, e'l sonno eterna notte adduce.†

* Ses cheveux (says Mad. de Stâel, in describing Corinne,) étaient rassemblés dans un *filet* de soie à l'Italienne.

† In the translation of this chorus, I have been indebted for several verses to Daniel.

Then amid springs, and flow'rs,
 In sweet delightful sort,
 Sat lovers without tortures, without wrongs ;
 And nymphs, and swains, in throngs
 Blended, in sweet disport,
 With whispers, kisses, and with kisses, songs :
 Then love prevail'd alone,
 And scorn was yet unknown ;
 The naked virgin then,
 Untutor'd to give pain,
 Or coldly treasure what might render blest,
 Bared to the sobbing gale,
 Her roses without veil,
 Nor hid the apples of her heaving breast :
 And oft in silver lake, or dancing stream,
 The lovers sported ; nor of ill did dream.
 Thou first, oh child of Pride !
 Each fountain of delight,
 Didst shut (relentless !) from the amorous thirst ;
 Thou taught'st fair eyes to hide
 The glory of their light,
 Refrain'd from men, and on themselves reverst ;
 Thou in a net didst first
 The golden tresses bind,
 Which floated in the wind,
 And sweet, and native wantonness restrain'd,
 The artless whisper chain'd,
 And bad'st the tongue betray the heart no more ;
 Oh Honour, it is thou !
 That mad'st each gesture feign'd,
 And that be stealth, which was a gift before.
 Honour ! 'tis thee that brings
 On human hearts their woes :
 But oh, fierce lord of Nature, and of Love !
 Tyrant of mighty kings !
 Why trouble our repose,
 Or leave the palace to torment the grove ?
 Go, and from us remove,
 Nor break the humble rest
 Of us, who poor, yet but for thee, were blest :
 Go !—with thy Gothic sway
 The haughty's sleep infest,
 Go ! and let us the ancient rites obey :
 Let's love—this life of ours
 Can make no truce with time that all devours ;
 Let's love—the Sun renews his course,
 With fresh resistless force ;
 But we—ah ! we, shall set in endless night,
 Nor spurn again the waves that quench'd our light.

No. XIII. I am aware how ridiculously apt a biographer or commentator is to find every thing in his author, and wish to be on my guard against it. I cannot however, help thinking, that Milton had his eye on this chorus in his unrivalled description of Adam and of Eve : I mean, that he attuned by it his soul to that exquisite tenderness, with which, during the composition of that description, it must have been inspired.

She, as a veil, down to the slender waist
 Her unadorned golden tresses wore
 Dishevel'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd.....
 Then was not guilty shame. * Dishonest Shame
 Of Nature's works, *Honour* dishonourable,
 Sin-bred ! how have ye troubled all mankind
 With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,
 And banish'd from man's life, his happiest life,
 Simplicity and spotless innocence !
 So pass'd they naked on, nor shunn'd the sight
 Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill.....
 Under a tuft of shade, that on a green
 Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain side
 They sat them down :
 On the soft downy bank *damask'd* with flow'rs :.....
 Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
 Wanted.....

In the *second act* of the *Aminta*, a Satyr is introduced complaining of the small effect which his masculine beauties had produced on the heart of Sylvia; and resolving, since neither prayers nor presents had prevailed, to conceal himself near a fountain where she was wont to bathe, and to treat her very rudely. To this fountain Aminta had been spirited up to go, and, upon his arrival, is fortunate enough to deliver Sylvia from the Satyr, who is binding her naked to a tree. This we learn from Tirsi in the *third act*, and from him too we learn that the nymph did not seem very grateful for the interposition of her lover, but had fled away as soon as untied. Aminta is so afflicted at this, that he is resolved to kill himself, but is prevented by Daphne, the friend of Sylvia, who is

* It seems to me that a *period* ought to be here, though in this mode of punctuation I am unsanctioned, I believe, by any edition of Milton.—See *P. L.* Book IV. v. 313.

a very accommodating sort of a lady, and forbids him to despair. While these two are conversing together, news is brought that Sylvia, after clothing herself, had hurried to the chace, and had pursued a huge wolf into the forest; that her veil had been found, and that near it several wolves were seen licking blood beside a skeleton. On this intelligence Aminta hurries away in despair. No. XIII.

In the *fourth act* Sylvia re-appears, and accounts for her safety; but at the same time is informed, that it is probable that the intelligence of her death had been fatal to Aminta. This she at first ridicules, but by degrees becomes alarmed, and her distraction is extreme when she learns that her lover has precipitated himself from a rock, invoking her name, and lamenting her death. She resolves to find and perform the funeral rites to his dead body, and then to follow him to the grave.

In the *fifth act*, which is narrative, we find that Aminta had been preserved in his descent by some shrubs and trees which grew from the face of the rock, and that, though much stunned, he was not otherwise injured. Sylvia had arrived during the stupour occasioned by his fall, and when he awakes, he finds himself clasped in her arms, and bathed with her tears.

Such is the outline of the piece which Tasso has adorned with all the magic of the most delicate, and glowing colouring. The language of this pastoral has a certain indescribable infantine naïveté, and what indeed must first and principally strike the person acquainted with the *Jerusalem*, on opening the *Aminta*, is this extreme difference of style. The works of an author have generally a family air, which betrays an identity of origin; and the drama of *Comus*, though possessed of considerable "mollities," is written with the same stately magnificence as the *Paradise Lost*. But between the style of the *Jerusalem*, and that of the *Aminta*, there is a difference as great as between the tones of the trumpet and the sighs of the Æolian lyre. The one is lofty, sonorous, and grand; the other is soft, delicate, and sweet. It has been said by Cicero, that, if Jupiter were to converse with men, it would be in the language of Plato; and did a golden age exist, the nymphs would speak the language of the *Aminta*.

As a biographer of Tasso, it may be proper for me, in the first place, to take notice of those passages in which he alludes to his situation, and the events of

NO. XIII, his life. I have mentioned in the text, that, under the name of Tirsi, our poet frequently does this; in imitation perhaps of Virgil, who, in his first eclogue, describes himself under the name of Tityrus, as allured from his native farm to behold the grandeur of Rome. Tasso has chosen for himself a pastoral name with the same first letter, and with the same number of letters as his own. By Elpino, whom he praises highly for his poetry and wisdom, he means Il Pigna, which has almost the same sound with the assumed name. By Batto he means Battista Guarini; and by Mopso, it is evident he designs Sperone, whom he thus distinguishes for his scoffing, and peevish disposition.

In act II. scene 2, our poet mentions his age, which was now twenty-nine :

Tirsi non vuoi
 Tu innamorarti ? sei giovane ancora,
 Nè passi di quattr' anni il quinto lustro,
 Se ben sovviemmi, quando eri fanciullo.

In act I. scene 2, of the pastoral, he had already given an account in what manner Mopsus, [that is, Sperone,] had discouraged him from visiting court, by mentioning the treachery and accusations which he would there meet with. He tells next how he arrived at Ferrara during games and feasts; and how he saw and was favourably received by the duke. Amongst others whom, he says, he met at court was Elpino, [Il Pigna;] and then he goes on to relate how he began an heroic poem, from prosecuting which he was for a time discouraged by the malignant remarks, or by the faint praise of Sperone. [See *Life*, page 178.]

O che sentii ! che vidi allora ! I' vidi
 Celesti Dee, Ninfe leggiadre, e belle
 Novi Lini ed Orfei.....
 Vidi Febo, e le Muse; e fra le Muse
 Elpin seder accolto, ed in quel punto
 Sentii me far di me stesso maggiore;
 Pien di nova virtù, pieno di nova
 Deitate, e cantai guerre, ed eroi,
 Sdegnando pastoral ruvido carne.....
 Udimmi Mopso poscia; e con maligno
 Guardo mirando affascinommi; ond'io
 Roco divenni, e poi gran tempo tacqui :
 Quando i pastor credean ch'io fossi stato
 Visto dal lupo; e'l lupo era costui.

Resuming again his story, in act II. sc. 2, Tasso talks with rapture of his situation at the court of Ferrara, and of the ease which he enjoys. There seems to be in nature something which, like a lamp that burns most brilliantly the moment it expires, announces, by the greatness of its degree, some absolute negation, or strong contrary mode of being. The delightful peace in the mind of our poet at this period was like that supernatural calm which foretells the approaching earthquake.

No. XIII.

O Dafne, a me quest' ozio ha fatto Dio :
 Colui che Dio quì può stimarsi : (a cui
 Si pascon gli ampi armenti, e l'ampie greggie
 Da l'uno a l' altro mare, e per i lieti
 Colti di fecondissime campagne,
 E per gli alpestri dossi d'Appenino.)
 Egli mi disse, allor che suo mi fece,
 Tirsi, altri scacci i lupi, e i ladri, e guardi
 I miei murati ovili; altri comparta
 Le pene, e i premj a' miei ministri; ed altri
 Pasca, e curi le greggi; altri conservi
 Le lane, e'l latte; ed altri le dispensi :
 Tu canta, or che se'n ozio : ond' è ben giusto,
 Che non gli scherzi di terreno amore,
 Ma canti gli avi del mio vivo, e vero
 Non so s'io lui mi chiami, Apollo, o Giove.

“ The *Aminta* of Tasso (says Mr Gibbon) was written for the amusement, and acted in the presence of Alphonso II. ; and his sister Leonora might apply to herself the language of a passion, which disordered the reason, without clouding the genius, of her poetical lover.” Whether a hopeless passion for this princess was the cause of the mental affliction of our poet, remains to be discussed; but it is certain that Leonora's powers of application were strong, if she could appropriate to herself a single passage of this pastoral. The chorus, which I have already mentioned, is rather the expression of general than of individual love; and the poet, indeed, openly professes in this drama, that he had gained a complete victory over that tyrannic passion, and was now be-

No. VII. come a general gallant. In fact, from some passages in his works, there are considerable grounds for doubt that this was the case.*

I cannot, indeed, upon an attentive perusal, discover in the *Aminta*, nor has any of the commentators, I believe, suggested a single allusion to the Princess Leonora. Perhaps, however, Tasso means her, when he speaks of L'Aurora, which he does twice.

Or non rammenti
Ciò che l'altr' ieri Elpino raccontava ?
Il saggio Elpino a la bella Licori,
Licori, ch'in Elpin puote con gli occhi
Quel ch'ei potere in lei dovria col canto,
S'el dovere in amor si ritrovasse.
E'l raccontava udendo Batto, e Tirsi,
Gran maestri d'amore, e'l raccontava
Ne l'antro de l'Aurora ove su l'uscio
E' scritto, " Lungi, ah lungi ite, profani."
Diceva Egli, e diceva, che gliel disse
Quel grande che cantò l'arme, e gli amori,
Ch'a lui lasciò la fistola morendo,
Che là giù nello 'nferno è un nero speco, &c.

Atto I. sc. 1.

This, laying aside its poetical and allegorical veil, may perhaps mean, " Il Pigna told Lucretia Bendidia, in the presence of Battista Guarini, and of Tasso, and in the chamber of Leonora, that Ariosto, whose worthy successor he is, tells that in hell there is a dark cave, &c.—(See *Or. Fur.* can. XXXIV.)

Though I have named the *Aminta* a pastoral, in conformity to the general custom, it has been entitled, by its author, *Favola Boscareccia*, or a *Sylvan Fable*; and neither its dramatic persons, nor those of the *Pastor Fido*, can be properly called pastoral; since it is rather the hunting state which they exhibit. A difference of opinion, analogous to that between the relative merit of the *Orlando Furioso* and *Jerusalem*, has existed with regard to the *Aminta* and *Pastor Fido*; and I believe the question has been terminated in a similar manner.

* *Oper.* vol. VIII. p. 245.

In general, the native Italians, and I think almost all foreign critics of eminence, such as Pope, Fontenelle, and others, have given the preference to the *Aminta*. I shall here specify some circumstances which lead me to think that this preference is just.

1. In the first place, though they should be considered as equal in merit, it cannot be denied that Guarini has not merely imitated, but even pillaged, a great deal from Tasso. I have already mentioned, that a passage in the fifth book of the *Rinaldo*, where Florindo relates how, being disguised in a female dress, he introduced himself amongst a band of virgins, for the purpose of kissing his mistress, has been copied by Guarini. The imitations of the *Aminta* in the *Pastor Fido* are innumerable; and in those passages where Tasso is closely copied, his rival appears to me greatly inferior. Thus, the first scene of both dramas is a conversation, in which the propriety of the sentiment of love, and the pleasures arising from it, are detailed by one of the *persons* to the other, who is described as averse to that passion. In the poem of Tasso, this conversation is exhibited as taking place between two females; and is natural and graceful;—it is otherwise in Guarini, where the discourse is put into the mouth of an old man and a tutor. Whoever will examine and compare these two scenes, in which the latter poet has professedly endeavoured to excel the other, will conclude, I think, that Guarini is surpassed by his great compeer. The same thing happens in the other parts of the two poems, where the resemblance is close.

While we remark, however, the obligations of Guarini to the writings of our poet, it must not be concealed, that Tasso's own beautiful idea of the bee, and incantation of Silvia, (*Aminta*, atto I. sc. 2.) is derived from Achilles Tatius, (Lib. II. cap. V.). Of this writer the first Greek edition was given to the world only in M.DCI.; but a Latin translation had, a long time before, been published by Annibal Cruceius, or Crucio, a native of Milan. This must have been the edition used by Tasso, and thus it tells the story:

“ Forte fortuna pridie ejus diei, circiter meridiem, Leucippe citharam pulsabat, aderam vero et ipse, Clioque illi assidebat. Ibi tum me deambulante, apicula quaedam, aliunde improvise advolans, Clionis manum pupugit: quae cum ejulasset, puella surrexit, depositaque citharâ, vulnus inspexit, ac bono animo esse jussit, dolorem se, inquires, duobus verbis abstersuram: didicisse enim ab Ægyptia quadam muliere, vesparum apumque morsibus mederi: ac simul ex-

No. XIII. cantavit : meliusculeque sibi esse paulo post Clio confessa est. Tunc igitur casus attulit, ut apis, forte vero etiam vespa quaedam, susurrans, faciem meam volitando circumiret. Occasione itaque inde arrepta, manumque ori adnota, vulnus accepisse, et dolorem sentire me finxi. Quam ob rem accurrens Virgo manum removit, et quae pars laesa esset, rogavit. Ego vero, labra respondi : tu autem charissima Leucippe, cur non excantas? Tum illa tanquam excantatura, os admovit, et labiorum meorum extrema contingens nescio quid immurmuravit. Interea ipse oscula furtim, nullo edito sono, dabam. Sed et puella dum in pronuncianda cantione labra nunc aperiret, nunc clauderet, efficiebat ut cantio in basia commutaretur. Itaque tum ego eam complectens palam suaviatus sum, illa vero retrocedens, Quid, inquit, agis? num tu etiam excantas? Atqui cantionem, inquam, exosculor, quoniam ea tu dolorem mihi omnem eripuisti. Quae cum intellixisset subridissetque, animus mihi accessit, ac subito : Heu mihi, charissima Leucippe, inquam, rursum atque acerbius pungor ; aculeus enim ad cor usque penetravit, excantionemque tuam exposcit. Apem certe tu quoque in ore gestas ; nam et mellis plena es, et basia tua vulnus imponunt. quare iterum, quaeso, excanta : sed tam cito cantionem absolvere noli, ne vulnus recrudescat. Atque inter loquendum manu validiore complexus, liberiusque osculatus sum. Illa tametsi repugnare videretur, sustinuit tamen."

I cannot, upon a pretty attentive perusal, discover any other obligations of Tasso to Achilles Tatius. In one other passage, perhaps, (atto I. s. 1.) where our poet is describing the influence of love, he had his eye on the Grecian romance writer. " Quod ad plantas attinet, (says Tatius, lib. I. cap. 17,) philosophorum sententia est plantas alteram alterius amore capi . . . Vipera, terrestris serpens, Muraenae in mari degentis amore deflagrat," &c. The author proceeds to relate, that the viper, struck with love, hisses on the sea-shore ; upon which the Muraena rises from the deep, but first she sits upon a rock till she sees her lover expel the poison from his mouth, and then hastens to his embraces. The same fable is recounted by Aristotle, Oppian, Pliny, and Aelian.

———— E se nol sai,

La biscia or lascia il suo veleno, e corre
Cupida al suo amatore amano ancora
Gli alberi, &c.

2. To return to the comparison of the two Italian pastorals; the fable of the *Aminta* is simple, and Tasso, with his usual propriety, has first formed an excellent design before he began to paint. In the *Pastor Fido* there is really a double plot, one of them hardly subordinate to the other; and the poet seems equally interested about Silvio and Dorinda, as with Mirtillo and Amarilli. In fact, they have scarcely any connection, and might form two plays; since all that relates to the former of these pairs might be taken away without injury to the fable. But, besides this double plot, the *Pastor Fido* is loaded with a number of episodes, so that it requires considerable attention not to be bewildered. When it was acted in Mantua before the Queen of Spain, about sixteen hundred verses were removed as superfluous, and as not injuring by their erasure the contexture of the fable. In the *Aminta* there is scarcely a superfluous line.

3. The poem of Tasso is both in its character and incidents, with the single exception of the Satyr, extremely natural. The *Pastor Fido*, in addition to its Satyr, abounds with improbabilities and inconsistencies. The stupid priests, who derive their origin from the gods, and who sacrifice human victims; the long discourse of Silvio and Echo, by which he is half persuaded that there is some pleasure in love; his mistaking Dorinda for a wolf; his shooting her; his subsequent love; and her miraculous cure; form, with the absurd and numerous oracles, a tissue of absurdities. I might blame, too, the scene in which the wig of Corisca is pulled off by the Satyr, and his fall on the occasion; the confused blind-man's-buff scene; and, indeed, the conception of almost all the incidents of the piece. Not only the *Materia Nuda*, but the constitution of the play, is indeed very crude; and in the third act, three soliloquies immediately follow each other.

4. In the *Aminta*, the sentiments of the speakers, though refined, are in general natural, and suited to the state of society which is intended to be represented. "It was said of Tasso, (says Dryden, speaking of this pastoral,) in relation to his similitudes, that he never departed from the woods, that is, all his comparisons are taken from the country." In the *Pastor Fido*, if we take away a few words, such as nymphs, woods, &c. nobody would ever suspect that the persons of the drama are Arcadians. Even the Satyr talks like an astronomer. The language of the *Aminta*, too, is exquisitely beautiful, and is

No. XIII. preferred by Guarini, in one of his letters, to that of any other poem of Tasso.* With regard to the *Pastor Fido*, on the other hand, it has been remarked by G. Malacreta, that there are many cacophonies, or badly sounding words and phrases in that poem. “The Academicians of Crusca, (says he) censuring the larger poem of Torquato Tasso, remarked some cacophonies or bad sounds, arising from the junction of certain words, and amounting, I think, to about to number of twenty, such as

*Al fido alfier,
che canuto,
man tremante,
barbaro barone.*

“Whether these censures be just or not, I shall not examine; this however is certain, that still stronger objections of this kind may be made to the *Pastor Fido*, and this is the less excusable, since the poem of Tasso is long, and subjected to rhyme; that of Guarini is comparatively short, and, in general, without such a restraint. Yet, upon merely glancing it over, a much greater number may be found than in the *Jerusalem*, and I shall set down twenty or thirty of these, merely to excite the attention of the reader to such an examination.

*Narr’ e ride,
leggitim’ amore
bellissm’ Amarilli,
pictosissim’ amante,” &c. †*

5. In the poem of Tasso, there are several conceits which cannot be justified; but these are in no great number. On the other hand, in the *Pastor Fido* they are innumerable, brought in on all occasions, and such as to render the work often obscure and enigmatical.

* Opera in quanto al dicitura da me stimata assai più d’ogni altra sua poesia.—Ed. Ciotti, p. 94.

† Gio. P. Malacreta. *Considerationi sopra il Pastor Fido*, p. 90.

Though I have found it necessary to say thus much concerning this celebrated work, I do not mean to deny that it has beauties, and great beauties. Every Italian reader knows the exquisite address to Spring, (atto III. sc. 1.) and the verses on the rose. (atto I. sc. 4.) Many of the sentiments are uncommonly ingenious, and those who read it, less as a dramatic poem, than as a collection of acute thoughts, delicate expressions, and often delightful poetry, will be highly pleased. The last act is peculiarly striking, and, had the story been more natural, would have been highly affecting.

The account which the shepherd gives of his saving Mirtillo from the torrent, atto V. sc. 5, compared with atto II. sc. 5, renders it probable that the *Pastor Fido* furnished some hints for the admirable tragedy of *Douglas*.

I shall conclude my remarks on these two celebrated pastorals, with a passage on the mode of their exhibition, from Mr Walker's *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*. "While the *Aminta* and *Pastor Fido* continued to be relished in Italy, they were often exhibited in gardens, or in groves, with only such scenery as nature supplied, and a rude *Scalinata*, formed of mounds of earth. Vestiges of a sylvan theatre, in which the latter was often represented, lately remained in the garden of the neglected villa Madama, which hangs over the Tiber, in the classical vicinity of Rome. Nor have sylvan dramatic exhibitions yet fallen into total disuse." In Mr Walker's very valuable work, there is a view of the villa Madama, from a print by Byrne; the original painting is by Richard Wilson.

No. XIV.—P. 213.

CONFORMITY OF THE JERUSALEM DELIVERED TO THE LAWS OF EPIC POETRY.

It has been remarked by the Abbé Terrasson, and it is a very curious fact, that though the critical rules of Aristotle and Bossu, relative to the epic poem, are derived from the *Iliad* of Homer, the *Jerusalem* of Tasso is more conform-

No. XIV. able to those rules, than the original work from which they are derived. “ La premiere regle du pöeme epique (says he) est, qu’on y propose une action. Je trouve que le fond de *l’Iliade* est la retraite, et l’inaction d’Achille, et sa conclusion, l’inutile tranquillité de ce pretendu heros, qui après le mort d’Hector ne se soucie plus de prendre Troye. Je trouve au contraire, que le fond de la *Jerusalem Delivrée* est le siege que Godefroy met devant cette place, et sa fin la conquête glorieuse qu’il en fait. On dit que cette action doit être unique : Je vois dans *l’Iliade* deux coleres du même Achille réellement distinctes, et qui à s’en tenir à cette idée de colere, la seule que fasse naitre la proposition du pöete, rendent son sujet veritablement double : je vois au contraire dans la *Jerusalem Delivrée* le seul dessein de prendre cette ville annoncé d’abord, et poussé sans interruption, et avec une prudence et une valeur toujours égale, jusqu’à son dernier accomplissement. On veut que cette même action soit grande, ou par elle-même, ou par les personnages qui l’executent ; l’action de *l’Iliade* selon le témoignage du P. de Bossu est tres-basse par elle-même : ce sont deux hommes qui se querellent pour une Esclave. La prise de Jerusalem, au contraire, est un des événemens les plus memorables qui se soient passez à la face de la terre. Par rapport aux personnages, les heros d’Homere sont rois ou princes, comme ceux de Tasse ; mais ceux d’Homere déshonorent leur naissance par la bassesse de leurs moeurs, ceux du Tasse au contraire, quoi qu’en different degré de sagesse et de courage, offrent les caracteres les plus nobles et les plus élégans que la pöesie ait jamais formée.”—*Dissert. sur l’Iliade*, I. 391.

This work of the Abbé Terrasson, though unjustifiably severe against the writings of the father of poetry, is the most acute and learned which the Homeric controversy brought forth in France. As the book is rare, and as nothing which concerns Homer can be considered as foreign in the life of an epic poet, I shall extract from it two passages, which seem to me possessed of much merit. In the first of these, Terrasson accuses the Grecian bard of having perverted the morality of mankind, by having altered their original idea of heroism. “ Pöete funeste au genre humain (says he) pour avoir changé la plus ancienne idée du heros ! Avant lui, ceux de l’Histoire et de la fable, un Osiris, un Bacchus, un Hercule, un Thesée avoient porté leurs bienfaits par toute la terre, ou purgé la nature de monstres et de brigands. Homère a donné

le premier un héros qui n'a jamais fait volontairement du bien à personne, et No. XIV.
qui, pour une querelle particuliere, a souhaité de voir perir tout ce qu'il con-
noissoit d'hommes au monde." *

In the other passage alluded to, Terrasson contrasts Homer's mode of composition with that of Virgil. After remarking the striking manner in which the latter poet has painted the courage and exploits of Eneas, his agitation on beholding the fall of Troy, and his alarms and terror while bearing Anchises from the flames, Terrasson adds, " Si Homere avoit eu cela a traiter, il auroit représenté d'abord tous les exploits d'Enée, depouillés de la plupart des sentimens dont ils sont revêtus dans Virgile, mais chargez, en recompense, d'une centaine de comparaisons : lorsqu' il en auroit été a l'article de la fuite, il auroit dit qu'au bruit de ceux qui sembloient les poursuivre dans l'obscurité Jupiter avoit versé la terreur dans l'ame d'Enée comme il le dit d'Ajax, lib. xi. Anchise de dessus les epaules de son fils, en le sentant chanceler, lui auroit reproché, comme on le reproche au brave Agamemnon, qu'il est un lâche, qui n'a jamais paru à la tête des troupes, ni tiré l'épée une seule fois en toute sa vie, et qui maintenant n'a pas la force de fuir dans le besoin." †

No. XV.—P. 218.

GALILEO'S PREFERENCE OF ARIOSTO TO TASSO.

Galileo's *Considerations* are not printed in any edition of his works, and the No. XV.
MS. was thought to have been lost when it was discovered by Serassi. I have only seen a quotation from them given by this author, in which the philosopher compares the style of Tasso to a picture formed of inlaid work ; that of Ariosto to a painting in oil. The taste of Galileo, which was very delicate in painting and music, does not seem to have been so refined on the subject of poetry ; and Redi laments his blindness to the energy, elegance, and majesty of the *Jerusalem Delivered*. These qualities of Tasso's poem have their ori-

* *Dissert. sur l'Iliade*, I. p. 296.

† *Ibid.* p. 484.

No. XV. gin in a considerable degree in the character of his style; and in fact this is the only circumstance in which the votaries of Ariosto will now allow his rival to have the preference.*

In a letter of Galileo to Francis Rinuccini, who had asked his reasons for preferring Ariosto to Tasso, the Italian philosopher thus expresses himself: "I would willingly obey you, and the undertaking would be practicable, if I had not lost, I know not how, my copy of Tasso. In this, having from leaf to leaf of the printed pages caused a blank one to be inserted, I had in the course of many months, and I might say of some years, marked all the parallel thoughts of the two authors, subjoining the reasons that led me to prefer the one to the other, and which were on the part of Ariosto at once more strong and numerous. It appeared to me, for instance, that the flight of Angelica is more florid and richly painted than that of Erminia; that Rodomont in Paris, without measure surpasses Rinaldo in Jerusalem; that between the discord in the camp of Agramant, and that in the camp of Godfrey, there is a proportion such as exists between immensity and the least quantity. That the love of Tancred towards Clorinda, and between the same knight and Erminia, is a most barren thing in proportion to the love of Ruggiero and Bradamante, embellished by all the noble events which can happen to two lovers; that is, with lofty and heroic deeds, reciprocally passing between them. In these passages of Ariosto there are exhibited the devouring passion of jealousy, lamentations, promises of faith mutually given and confirmed, fits of anger conceived and afterwards appeased by a mournful expostulation uttered in a single word! What most dry sterility is that of Armida, a most powerful enchantress, when she wants to retain with herself her dear Rinaldo! What, on the contrary, is the abundance of all allurements, of all diversions, of all delights, with which Alcina entertains Ruggiero!" Some of these propositions are sufficiently remarkable; but when Galileo proceeds to prefer the character-drawing of the personages of Ariosto, he appears to have adopted all the blind prejudices of the Florentine Academy of Crusca, whose fury was then at its height. "Then, (continues he,) the observation of manners is truly wonderful in Ariosto. What, and how many, and how different

* Tiraboschi, *Storia*, &c. vol. iii. p. 253, Ed. Mathias.

are the turns which represent Marfisa rash, and careless of every one; how well is represented the boldness and generosity of Mandricard! how many the proofs of Ruggiero's prowess, gentleness, and greatness of soul! What shall we say of the faith, constancy, and chastity of Olympia, Isabella, and Drusilla? or, on the contrary, of Origille and Gabrina's perfidy and treachery, or of Doralice's fickleness? The more I should say, the more I would remember; but only to sketch them, and not to come to examples from step to step, could give no satisfaction to myself, and much less to you."

It has been well remarked by Johnson, in his life of Dryden, that "it is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to be estimated; but by their general effects, and ultimate results." It was, therefore, not sufficient for Galileo to mark down all the parallel passages of the two poets, and thence draw a comparison: as thus all the beauties of design in Tasso, (in which he is supreme,) would be utterly lost. For example, even if it were allowed that the pastimes with which Alcina entertains Ruggiero, are more diversified than those with which Armida amuses Rinaldo; yet what a difference betwixt these episodes! Alcina is a vile old abominable hag, (*Orlando Fur.* c. VII. 73.) all whose charms are fictitious; against whom her lover was put on his guard; and who finds it necessary to relieve the languor of his appetite by feasts, balls, and the chace. Armida is a young and beautiful virgin, who is truly enamoured of Rinaldo; full of sentiment, they spend their hours in those repetitions of love, which are not repetitions to the heart; and their retirement, far from mankind, to the Fortunate Isles, has a certain romantic charm which it is impossible to describe.

Perhaps, however, it was to be expected that Galileo should prefer Ariosto to Tasso, as, after being fatigued with mathematical labours, the amusing whims of the romantic bard were a much better *délassement* than the dignified epic of his rival. The same preference I have observed in an illustrious philosopher, who resembles Galileo in uniting the love of literature with scientific genius; and who, like him, is not more distinguished by the profoundness of his investigations, than by the wonderful elegance with which they are revealed. *

* Mr P——r.

No. XVI.—P. 226.

GARDEN OF ARMIDA.

No. XVI.

Poi che lasciar gli avviluppati calli,
 In lieto aspetto il bel giardin s'aperse;
 Acque stagnanti, mobili christalli,
 Fior varj, e varie piante, herbe diverse,
 Apriche collinette, ombrose valli,
 Selve e spelunche in una vista offerse:
E quel, che'l bello, e'l caro accresce à l'opre
L'arte, che tutto fà, nulla si scopre.

Stimì (sì misto il culto è co'l negletto)
Sol naturali, e gli ornamenti, e i siti;
Dì Natura arte par, che per diletto
L'imitatrice sua scherzando imiti.
 L'aura, non ch'altro, è de la Maga effetto;
 L'aura, che rende gli alberi fioriti:
 Co' fiori eterni, eterno il frutto dura:
 E mentre spunta l'un, l'altro matura.

* * *

Vezzosi augelli infra le verdi fronde
 Temprano à prova lascivette note;
 Mormora l'aura, e fà le foglie, e l'onde
 Garrir, che variamente ella percote,
 Quando taccion gli augelli, alto risponde.
 Quando cantan gli augei, più lieve scote;
 Sia caso, od arte, hor accompagna, et hora
 Alterna i versi lor la musica ora.

The garden next, when through the troubled maze
 They now had pass'd, their rapt attention drew;
 Here sleeps a lake, and there a streamlet strays,
 And trees bloom fair, and flow'rs of every hue;
 Sun-gilded hills, dales hid from Phœbus' rays,
 And groves, and mossy caves at once they view;
 And what did beauty most, and wonder yield,
 Art shew'd her utmost power, but art conceal'd.

So with the rude the elegant was join'd,
 That native grace prevail'd, and sooth'd the heart;
 It seem'd that sportive nature had design'd
 To imitate, her imitator, art;
 Soft were the breathings of the vernal wind,
 The wind which endless verdure did impart;
 Eternal fruits on every branch endure,
 Those swelling from their buds, and these mature.

* * *

The joyous birds, hid under green-wood shade,
 Sung merry notes on every branch and bough;
 The wind that in the bow'rs and waters play'd,
 Attun'd the leaves, whence incense sweet did flow;
 When ceas'd the birds, the wind loud answer made,
 And while they sung, it whisper'd soft and low;
 By turns they sink, by turns their music raise,
 And blend with equal skill harmonious lays.

Spenser, who is indebted to Armida's garden for his *Bovere of Bliss*, has translated the above two stanzas, in which it is asserted, that all the ornaments, however artificial, appeared natural; but as his taste was much less pure than that of Tasso, he no sooner does this, than he describes an artificial fountain, and a kind of bason in its neighbourhood, in which he places the two naked damzelles described by the Italian poet.—See *Faerie Queene*, Book II. can. 12.

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There the most daintie paradise on ground
 Itselfe doth offer to his sober eye,
 In which all pleasures plentiously abound,
 And none does others happinesse envie;
 The painted flow'rs; the trees upshooting hie;
 The dales for shade; the hills for breathing space;
 The trembling groves; the cristall running by;
 And, that which all fair works doth most aggrace,
 The art which all that wrought, appeared in no place.

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One would have thought, (so cunningly the rude
 And scorned parts were mingled with the fine,)
 That nature had for wantonnesse ensude
 Art, and that art at nature did repine;
 So striving each the other to undermine,
 Each did the other's worke more beautify;
 So differing both in willes, agreed in fine:
 So all agreed, through sweet diversity,
 whis garden to adorn with all variety.

60

And in the midst of all a fountain stood,
 Of richest substance that on earth might bee,
 So pure and shiny that the silver flood
 Through every channel running one might see;
 Most goodly it with curious imageree
 Was overwrought, and shapes of naked boyes;
 Of which some seem'd with lively jollitee
 To fly about, playing their wanton toyes,
 Whil'st others did themselves embay in liquid joyes.

61

And over all, of purest gold was spred
 A trail of ivie in his native hue;
 For the rich metall was so coloured,
 That wight who did not well avis'd it ve
 Would surely deem it to be ivie true:
 Low his lascivious armes adown did creepe
 That themselves dipping in the silver dew
 Their fleecie flow'rs they tenderly did steepe,
 Which drops of crystall seem'd for wantonness to weepe.

62

Infinite streames continually did well
 Out of this fountaine, sweete and faire to see,
 The which into an ample laver fell
 And shortly grew to so great quantitie
 That like a little lake it seem'd to bee;
 Whose depth exceeded not three cubits hight,
 That through the waves one might the bottom see,
 All pay'd beneath with jasper shining bright
 That seem'd the fountaine in that sea did sayle upright.

And all the margent round about was set
 With shady laurell trees, thence to defend
 The sunny beames, which on the billowes bet,
 And those which therein bathed, mote offend.
 As Guyon hapned by the same to wend,
 Two naked damzelles he therein espide.—

Spenser then proceeds to describe the two bathing nymphs, but though he almost translates from Tasso, his painting is much less delicate and more licentious. The Damzelles of Spenser are shameless strumpets; those of Tasso preserve, in a considerable degree, the sweetest charm of modesty. The *Bower of Bliss*, too, is greatly injured by the admission of allegorical personages, as by the comely dame *Excesse*, who sits under the porch with a cup in her hand. There is nothing of the retirement, the secrecy, and solitude of the garden of Armida; for while the witch Acrasia is sitting with her lover,

— round about them pleasantly did sing
 Many fair ladies, and lascivious boyes,
 That ever mixt their song with light licentious toyes.

In one thing Spenser has been commended for his departure from Tasso. This poet has described, in the garden of Armida, a parrot singing, as with a human voice, a very soothing and delightful song. This song is literally translated by Spenser, but he omits the circumstance of the bird, and introduces it with "The whiles some one did chaunt this lovely lay." Voltaire, too, ridicules the parrot of Tasso, "*un perroquet*, says he, *chantant des chansons de sa propre composition*, is a fable very strange to the eyes of a sensible reader accustomed to approve nothing but nature."

I must confess that I have always regarded this incident of the parrot as an extremely happy one. In the days of Tasso this bird was by no means so common in Europe as at present, and to his romantic mind a bird so beautiful, so rare, and which spoke as with a human voice, must have seemed an appropriate inmate in an enchanted scene. The gardens of Armida, too, were in an

No. XVI. island of the western ocean, the region where parrots abound; and it was no great stretch of poetical daring, to suppose that one of them had been taught by that enchantress to repeat a few verses. Tasso by no means asserts that the parrot went about *chantant des chansons de sa propre composition*, and if he had, in an enchanted garden, I see no great harm in it.

What is principally faulty in point of taste in the garden episode, are the strained *conceits* uttered by Rinaldo, while Armida is decking herself, and looking into the mirror held by that hero. This circumstance [by the way] of Rinaldo wearing a looking glass by his side,* I had considered as a mere conceit of Tasso, for the purpose of introducing the gallant expressions I have just now taken the liberty to censure. A passage, however, extracted for a different purpose, by the ingenious author of the *Curiosities of Literature*, from an old French writer, illustrates, I think very happily, this part of Tasso's poem. "In 1586, [says he] Jean des Caures, an old French moralist, declaiming against the fashions of his day, notices one of the ladies carrying mirrors *fixed to their waists*, which seemed to employ their eyes in perpetual activity. From this mode will result, according to honest Des Caures, their eternal damnation. 'Alas, he exclaims, in what an age do we live, to see such depravity which we see! that induces them even to bring into church those scandalous

* Dal fianco de l'amante, estranio arnese,
Un christallo pendea lucido, e netto ;
Sorse, e quel fra le mani à lui sospese
A' i misteri d'amor, ministro eletto.
Con luci ella ridenti, ei con accese,
Mirano in varj oggetti un sol oggetto.
Ella del vetro a se fa specchio, et egli
Gli occhi di lei sereni à se fa spegli.

Gerus, lib. can. xvi. 20.

Dependent from his side (unusual sight,)
Appear'd a polish'd mirror, beamy bright,
This in his hand th' enamour'd champion rais'd,
On this, with smiles, the fair Armida gaz'd ;
She in the glass her form reflected spies,
And he consults the mirror of her eyes.

HOOPE.

mirrors hanging about their waists! Let all histories, divine, human, and prophane be consulted, never will it be found that these objects of vanity were ever thus brought into public by the most meretricious of their sex. It is true, at present none but the ladies of the court venture to wear them, but long it will not be, before every citizen's daughter, and every female servant, will wear them."* We see from this passage, that the mirror hanging by the side of Rinaldo was an appropriate ornament in the condition in which he is described, and expressive at once of effeminacy and elegance. It is not improbable, however, that Tasso himself was the occasion of introducing by his verses this fashion against which Des Caures complains, as it appears to have been becoming general only in 1586, that is, six years after the publication of the *Jerusalem Delivered*.†

In defence too of the gallant verses addressed by Rinaldo to Armida, while decking herself by his mirror, it may be said that a lover in his predicament is not to be taxed too heavily in the coin of common sense. We are to consider them not as addressed to an unimpassioned reader, but to a fond mistress, who loves absurdity better than sound logic, as being a proof of the power of her charms, and the intoxication they produce. After all, the verses spoken by Rinaldo to Armida, though in some degree strained and fantastical, are pretty; and they have been imitated by Spenser in a very pleasing sonnet:

Leave, lady, in your glasse of crystall cleane
 Your goodly selfe for evermore to view :
 And in myself, my inward selfe I meane,
 Most lively like behold your semblant true.
 Within my heart, though hardly it can shew
 Thing so divine to view of earthly eye,
 The fair idea of your celestial hew,
 And every part remaines immortally :

* *Curiosities of Literature*, vol. I. p. 374, fifth edition.

† In the celebrated series of paintings of the Heathen Divinities, by Titian, Venus is portrayed with a mirror in her hand, into which she looks while Mars is embracing her.

No. XVI.

And were it not that through your crueltie,
 With sorrow dimmed and deform'd it were,
 The goodly image of your visnomy
 Clearer than crystall would therein appeare.
 But if yourself in me, ye plaine will see,
 Remove the cause by which your faire beames dark'ned bec.*

It is not only in the beautiful canto [book ii. can. 12.] which contains the description of the *Bowre of Bliss*, the whole of which canto is imitated, and almost one half of it translated from Tasso, that Spenser is indebted to this poet. The greater part of the second book of the *Faerie Queene* bespeaks an unwearied attention in its author to the *Jerusalem Delivered*. I might mention the battle between Prince Arthur and Pyrocles strongly resembling that of Tancred and Argantes; the *Ydle Lake*, which is the dead Sea of Tasso, by which Armida had a palace; and a number of passages pointed out by Spenser's commentators. I doubt not that Guyon's descent into the earth with Mammon was suggested by the subterraneous visit which Ubaldo and Carlo pay to the Christian magician, and that Prince Arthur's perusal, in the old man's chamber, of the history of his ancestors, (though in its execution closely resembling a passage in the *Orlando Furioso*,) was introduced into that book from the detail which Peter reveals to Rinaldo of the heroes of the house of Este. But what in this book, next to the *Bowre of Bliss*, principally deserves attention, is the island in the Ydle Lake, to which Phaedra conducts Cymochles; and, as this passage of Spenser is the germ of Thomson's delightful *Castle of Indolence*, I shall here subjoin a translation of the verses of Tasso, which form the radical principle of the whole.

57

Armida still pursued through wood and plain,
 Till on Orontes' bank Rinaldo stay'd,
 Where the swift stream did part and meet again,
 And in the mid'st a flow'ry island made:

Here rose a pillar fair beside the main,
 And near a little frigate floating play'd.—
 The marble white the prince did long behold,
 And this inscription read engrav'd in gold.

No. XVI.

58

“ Oh thou whom chance, or choice doth hither bring,
 With happy steps, where lone Orontes glides;
 Know that the world hath not so strange a thing,
 From east to west, as yon small island hides.
 But pass and see.”—And quick the youth did fling
 His active limbs within the vessel's sides—
 Alone he pass'd (nor could it more contain)
 Alone he pass'd, and bade his squires remain;

59

Landed, he wanders round, yet nothing sees
 But verdant groves, sweet shades, and mossy rocks;
 With caves, and fountains, flowers, herbs, and trees—
 And now he deems the marble only mocks—
 Yet this sweet isle the rudest breast might please,
 So down he sits, and soon his helm unlocks;
 His stifling helm, and bares his visage fair,
 To drink the freshness of the scented air.

60

Carelesse he wox, as one inclin'd to sleep,
 But soon a gurgling sound arous'd the knight;
 One billow rose upon the placid deep,
 Then sunk again, then rose to greater height;
 And soon he saw with golden tresses peep,
 The rising image of a virgin bright;
 And then her snowy neck, and heaving breast,
 While crystal billows wanton'd round the rest.

61

So from the stage, while magic scenes appear,
 Some Naiad rises slow, or fairy queen:
 Syren she was not, yet she won the ear,
 And charm'd frail sense as she had Syren been;

No. XVth

One of those sisters false, who haunted near
 The Tuscan shores, and kept those waters sheene—
 Such was her voice, such was her visage fair,
 And thus she sung, bewitching earth and air,

62

“ Oh happy youths, whom April fresh, and May,
 Attire in flow’ry green of lusty age;
 Ah! let not Virtue with fallacious ray,
 Nor glory vain, your tender minds engage :
 Who plucks the flow’r before it pass away,
 Who follows pleasure, he alone is sage—
 So Nature bids, and ’gainst her sacred will,
 Why still rebel you, wherefore strive ye still.

63

“ Oh fools ! who youth possess, yet lose the prime,
 Nor seize the fleeting, short-abiding joy;
 Worth, valour, glory, are but names sublime,
 Delusive names, which artful men employ :
 And what is Fame—the victim soon of Time;
 Of Time whose power she threaten’d to destroy—
 A dream, a phantom, which with wish insane,
 Fond man pursues, yet still pursues in vain.

64

“ But let your happy souls the thirst assuage
 Of every sense, nor pain the body fair;
 Past woes forget, nor think in future age
 What ills may come, nor speed the steps of care;
 Heed not the threatening sky, the thunder’s rage,
 The groaning ocean, nor the warring air;
 This, this is wisdom ; Nature tells us this,
 And bids us consecrate our youth to bliss.”

65

So sung the yren false, and stealing sleep,
 To which the song entic’d his heavy eyes,
 By step, and step, did on Rinaldo creep :
 Torpid each limb, and void of motion lies;

Not rolling thunders from his slumbers deep,
 (Of death the image true) could make him rise;
 Glad the enchantress view'd him as he lay,
 And from her ambush, darted on her prey. *

Mr Mickle, whose admiration of Camöens has all the blindness and injustice of passion, greatly prefers that poet's Isle of Venus to "the Island of Armida in Tasso, and its translation, the Bower of Acrasia in Spenser." On this subject I shall subjoin a few remarks. The fiction of the Isle of Venus is contained in the ninth book of the *Lusiad*, and is as follows. Venus, in order to console the Portuguese for the sufferings they had endured in India, from the vengeance of Bacchus, determines to gratify them with sensual indulgences in their voyage homeward. She mounts her silver car, drawn by swans, and visits Cupid in Idalia, for the purpose of invoking him to inspire the Nereids with

* *Gerusalemme*, lib. XIV. which compare with the *Færie Queene*, book II. can. 6. from the beginning, and this latter with the Wizard's song in the first canto of the *Castle of Indolence*. See too *Ger. Lib.* can. XVII. 60. *Færie Queene*, book II. can. 3. st. 40

Mr Hume, in his *Epicurean*, paraphrases this song of the Syren in the following manner: "Ye happy youths, ye favoured of heaven! while the wanton spring pours upon you all her blooming honours, let not *glory* seduce you with her delusive blaze, to pass in perils and dangers this delicious season, this prime of life. Wisdom points out to you the road to pleasure. Nature, too, beckons you to follow her in that smooth and flowery path. Will you shut your ears to their commanding voice? Will you harden your heart to their soft allurements? Oh deluded mortals! thus to lose your youth, thus to throw away so invaluable a present, to trifle with so perishing a blessing. Contemplate well your recompence. Consider that glory which so allures your proud hearts, and seduces you with your own praises. It is an echo, a dream, nay, the shadow of a dream, dissipated by every wind, and lost by every contrary breath of the ignorant and ill-judging multitude. You fear not that even death itself shall ravish it from you. But behold! while you are yet alive, calumny bereaves you of it; ignorance neglects it; nature enjoys it not; fancy alone, renouncing every pleasure, receives this airy recompence, empty and unstable as herself."

Of the numerous pretended imitators of Spenser, Thomson alone seems to have been aware of the true characteristics of that poet, and properly to have expressed them. I mean not so much his lively and lavish imagery, and his mellifluous flow of versification, as a certain sweet, voluptuous, and almost pathetic tenderness, of which Tasso, as he was the first, so he is the most perfect model, and from whom, in my opinion, the English poet derived it. When I say that Tasso was the first model, I mean in a *long* poem, for it is to be found in some of the ancient odes.

No. XVI. love for the Lusitanian heroes. With this request her son readily complies ; so that, according to Camöens,

Even Thetis' self confest the tender smart,
And pour'd the murmurs of the wounded heart.

The ladies accordingly leave their grottoes, and repair (conducted by Venus) to a kind of floating island, where they anxiously await the arrival of the fleet. The description suggests the idea of a bawd instructing a bevy of strumpets to decoy a crew of honest tars, who are daily expected.

The beauteous Nereids, flush'd in all their charms,
Surround the goddess of the soft alarms :
Right to the isle she leads the smiling train,
And all her arts her balmy lips explain :
The fearful languor of the asking eye,
The lovely blush of yielding modesty,
The grieving look, the sigh, the favouring smile,
And all th' endearments of the open wile,
She taught the nymphs—in willing breasts that heav'd
To hear her lore, her lore the nymphs receiv'd.

The Isle of Love is at last discovered by the Portuguese, and is immediately fixed by Venus. It is then described, with minute and tedious prolixity, as an enumeration is given of all the trees and flowers contained in it, in the manner of “ a nurseryman or a florist's catalogue.” The names of several birds are then recited, and, as if all this were not enough, a list is given of some animals which were roaming in this rural ark.

The fleet casts anchor, and the Portuguese land, quite unaware of the society which Venus had prepared for them. By and by, however, they are surprised and delighted with the view of a vast number of naked females, some hunting, some playing on the harp or lute, others bathing. Instantly they rush after the Nereids, each catches the nymph whom he first reaches, and Thetis herself is the prize of Gama.

Now all this, as painted by Camöens, is not only lascivious, but lasciviousness of a very gross and indelicate species; and “ il faut avouer (with Vol-

taire) qu' une isle enchantée, dont Vénus est la déesse, et ou des nymphes ca- No. XVI.
ressent des matelots après un voyage de long cours, ressemble plus à un
Musico d'Amsterdam qu'à quelque chose d'honnête." Mr Mickle, however,
not only asserts the purity of the ninth book of the poem of Camöens, but af-
firms, that the fiction of the Isle of Venus is the finest specimen ever given of
luxuriant painting. " Not to mention Ariosto," says he, " whose descriptions
will often admit of no palliation, Tasso, Spenser, and Milton have always been
esteemed as the chastest of poets; yet, in the delicacy of warm description,
the inartificial modesty of nature, none of them can boast the continued uni-
formity of the Portuguese poet. Though there is a warmth in the colouring
of Camöens, which even the genius of Tasso has not reached, and *though the*
Island of Armida is evidently copied from the Lusiad, yet those who are possess-
ed of the finer feelings will easily discover an essential difference between
the love scenes of the two poets." They certainly will;—for what is there
in common between the casual fruition of a number of Portuguese sailors al-
laying the fervour of appetite with Nereids, in the neighbourhood, and even,
it would seem, in the presence of each other?—what is there in common be-
tween this and the sweet retirement, the remote seclusion of Rinaldo, amidst
enchancing scenes, with the youthful beauty whom he adored?

Voici la charmante retraite
De la félicité parfaite;
Voici l'heureux séjour
Des jeux, et de l'amour.*

The translator of Camöens, after his high claims of superiority for that poet,
discovers great alarm lest his author should be supposed to have borrowed the
description of his Isle of Venus from any antecedent writer. " Camöens, (says
he) read and admired Ariosto; but it by no means follows, that he borrowed
the hint of his Island of Venus from that poet. The luxury of flowery descrip-
tion is as common in poetry, as are the tales of love—When incidents, charac-

* Quinault, *Armide*.

No. XVI. ter, and conduct confess the resemblance, we may, with certainty, pronounce from whence the copy is taken. Where only a similar stroke of passion or description occurs, it belongs only to the arrogance of dulness to tell us on what passage the poet had his eye. Every great poet has been persecuted in this manner; Milton in particular. His commentators have not left him a flower of his own growth.—When Gaspar Poussin painted clouds and trees in his landscapes, he did not borrow the green and the blue of the leaf and the sky from Claude Lorraine. Neither did Camöens, when he painted his Island of Venus, spend the half of his life in collecting his colours from all his predecessors, who had described the beauties of the vernal year, or the stages of passion. Camöens knew how others had painted the flowery bowers of love; these formed his taste and corrected his judgment. He viewed the beauties of nature with poetical eyes—from thence he drew his landscapes; he had felt all the allurements of love, and from these he describes the agitations of that passion.”

After these sensible remarks, which are contained in the *Dissertation on the fiction of the Island of Venus*, subjoined to the ninth book of his translation of the *Lusiad*, it is curious that Mr Mickle should affirm, two pages subsequent to the above quotation, that “Tasso as undoubtedly built upon the model of Camöens, as Spenser appropriated the imagery of Tasso, when he described the Bower of Bliss of Acrasia, part of which he has literally translated from the Italian poet.” Thus we see, when Camöens describes voluptuous bowers, he paints from nature and his own feelings; but, if Tasso attempts this, he must needs be copying from Camöens!

This is not the only place where Mr Mickle, nor is he the only commentator of the Portuguese poet who is anxious to represent Tasso as indebted to Camöens. I must declare, however, that, neither in the Gardens of Armida, nor in any other passage of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, can I find the smallest obligation to the *Lusiad*. It is curious, indeed, that in two epic poems of such length, a number of parallel passages are not found, especially as both writers studiously meditated the ancients. Even though we allow, (what nowhere appears,) that Tasso understood the language of the *Lusiad*, yet, as that poem was published only in 1572, when our poet had completed eighteen can-

tos of his work, it is not easy to see how he could be indebted to it. Mr No. XVI. Mickle says, that it does not appear that Milton, whose literary curiosity was so great, ever read the *Lusiad*, either in the original, or in Sir Richard Fanshawe's translation, which latter was published fourteen years before the *Paradise Lost*. How, then, are we to suppose that the *Lusiad* should instantly have found its way from Portugal to Italy, and that Tasso should immediately have begun the study of Portuguese for the purpose of perusing a work, written by an author, nameless before, and neglected after, the publication of his poem? This is the more unlikely, as, a year after the publication of the *Lusiad*, Tasso had his hands full of other employment, as the writing the *Aminta*, part of the *Torrismondo*, an *Oration* on the deceased Duchess of Ferrara, and other compositions.

It is certain, therefore, that Tasso has no obligations to the Portuguese poet; and the probability is, he could only become acquainted with the *Lusiad* in the Spanish translation of 1580. It is even uncertain whether he ever met with it at all; for, though there is a sonnet in his works addressed to Vasco di Gama, in which he makes mention of an illustrious poet of the name of Lewis, by whom that hero had been celebrated: the sonnet is entitled, "Al Signor Luigi Corma, che fece un Poema in Ispagnuolo sopra i Viaggi del Vasco." There is scarcely a doubt, however, that Corma, though that is the name in the first edition of this sonnet, (which is now before me,) and in all the others I have seen, is a misprint for Camöens. It is more difficult to account for the affirmation, that the poem on Vasco is written in Spanish. In the original edition, the title is "Loda il Signor Luigi Corma, il quale ha Scritto un Poema in Lingua Spagnuolo de' Viaggi del Vasco." The sonnet appears to have been written in 1586, and is as follows:—

Vasco, le cui felici, ardite antenne
 Incontro al sol, che ne riporta il giorno
 Spiegar le vele, e fer colà ritorno,
 Dove egli par che di cadere accenne;
 Non più di te per aspro mar sostenne
 Quel, che fece al Ciclope oltraggio e scorno;
 Ne chi torbò l'Arpie nel suo soggiorno;
 Ne diè più bel soggetto a colte penne.

No. XVI.

Ed or quella del colto, e buon Luigi,
 Tant 'oltre stende il glorioso volo,
 Che i tuoi spalmati legni andar men lunge.
 Ond' a quelli, a cui s'alza il nostro polo,
 Ed a chi ferma incontra i suoi vestigi,
 Per lui del corso tuo la fama aggiunge.

The following is the translation of Mr Mickle:—

Vasco, whose bold and happy bowsprit bore
 Against the rising morn; and, homeward fraught,
 Whose sails came westward with the day, and brought
 The wealth of India to thy native shore;
 Ne'er did the Greek such length of seas explore,
 The Greek who sorrow to the Cyclop wrought;
 And he who, victor, with the Harpies fought,
 Never such pomp of naval honours wore.
 Great as thou art, and peerless in renown,
 Yet thou to "Lewis" ow'st thy noblest fame;
 Farther than thou didst sail, his deathless song
 Shall bear the dazzling splendour of thy name;
 And under many a sky thy actions crown,
 While time and fame together glide along.

If this sonnet be excepted, which might have been composed without ever having seen the *Lusiad*, (a circumstance which the mistake both of the name of the author, and of the language in which his poem is written, renders probable,) I have not met the name of Camöens in all the voluminous writings of Tasso. This is the more remarkable, as in the enlargement of his *Discourses on Heroic Poetry*, (which was accomplished in summer 1587, when the original three were expanded to six,) so favourable an opportunity of mentioning Camöens occurred. The wonder is encreased, when it is considered that these six discourses, like all the latter writings of their author, are exceedingly pedantic. No less than a hundred and twenty-six writers, forty of whom are poets, are named or quoted in them. It must seem surprising then, that Tasso, when writing expressly on the subject of heroic poetry, when speaking of proper subjects for epic song, when recommending subjects having an historical foundation, and scenes laid in distant countries, should never hint the

name of Camöens. "Dee," says he, (vol. V. 381,) "dunque il poeta schivar No. XVII, gli argomenti finti massimamente se finge esser avvenuta alcuna cosa in paese vicino o conosciuto, e fra nazione amica, perchè fra popoli lontani, e ne' paesi incogniti possiamo finger molte cose di leggieri senza togliere autorità alla favola. Però di Gottia, e di Norvegia, e di Suevia, e di Islanda, o dell' *Indie Orientali*, o di paesi di nuovo ritrovati nel vastissimo oceano oltre le colonne d'Ercole, si dee prender la materia de' si fatti poemi." What a natural opening to mention Camöens was here! that, however, is not done, a circumstance which cannot be attributed to any jealousy in Tasso, who in no instance discovers this mean passion, and who, had he felt it, would never have written the above sonnet. In short, it is uncertain if Tasso ever read the *Lusiad*, but it is very certain, that his *Jerusalem* has not, and, from chronological considerations, could not, have any obligations to that work.

No. XVII.—P. 270.

SUMMARY OF TASSO'S LETTERS RELATIVE TO THE REVISION OF HIS JERUSALEM.

The following summary of the letters of Tasso to his revisors may be useful to those who wish to trace the connection between his literary vexations and mental alienation. In the *Opere di T. Tasso*, they are placed in a disorderly manner, and in several instances the date of the year and name of the month, are printed incorrectly. I have bestowed a very considerable degree of labour on their correction and arrangement, as being most valuable documents in the story of our poet's life. No. XVII.

A. D. 1574.

Nov. 13. To Porzia (see *Life* &c. page 195.) Informs him that he had begun, in the preceding August, the last canto of the *Jerusalem*, but

No. XVII.

had been attacked by a quartan fever, followed by an infinite degree of languor, which still prevented him from writing even a letter.

A. D. 1575.

March 18. (X. p. 250.) From Padua to Scipio Gonzaga. Is in great anxiety because Scipio had not, in his letter of the seventh, acknowledged the receipt of the *four* first cantos of the *Jerusalem*, which Tasso had sent from Ferrara on the second day of Lent—informs him that he had likewise sent from Padua the *fifth* canto on the third of March, and that, though the *sixth* is ready, he will retain it till he learns the fate of the others. Recommends to him Luca Scalabrino, who intends visiting Rome before Easter, and who, he says, is well acquainted both with his intentions, and with all the unpleasant circumstances of his situation.

——26. (X. p. 251.) From Padua. Is happy at having heard of Scipio's having got intelligence of the cantos.—Doubts they had been read, and begs him to take care of this, lest they should be transcribed and published surreptitiously.—Requests him to obtain the privilege of Naples and Parma; “che di Fiorenza non mi risolvo ancora come governarmi.”—Sends the *sixth* canto, and tells him he would send the seventh, were it not that he wishes to change a stanza.

——31. (X. p. 96.) Intends to return that day from Padua to Ferrara. Is extremely uncomfortable in this latter city.—Resolves, a few months after the publication of his poem, to take up his abode in Rome, and to live frugally on the profits, or in the service of some cardinal.—Bids him to take care how he writes about changing his service, as, if the letters be seen, it might greatly injure him.—Has left the *seventh* canto at Padua with John Vin. Pinelli, to be transmitted to him.

April 6. (X. p. 249.) From Ferrara to Cardinal Albano. Is in hopes that, by the aid of the criticisms of his friends, he will be enabled to publish in September. (See *Life*, p. 197.)

April 13. [X. p. 97.] Miscellaneous reflections. [This, and all the letters where No. XVII.

I do not mention the address, is to Scipio Gonzaga.]

— 15. [X. p. 98.] Critical remarks on his poem.—Dreads the fatigue of many changes.—Sends the *eighth* and *ninth* cantos.—Criticisms.—Wishes to know if what is rumoured of the prohibition of the publication of different poems at Rome be true.—Requests Scipio to obtain the privilege, and to give him his advice about some printer.

— 27. [X. p. 101.] Sends the *tenth* canto.—It seemed a thousand years till he had reached the middle of his poem. Tells him he need expect no more for a month. “Perché voglio questa settimana, che viene, accominciar a purgarmi, e non far nulla per dieci giorni.”—Wishes, in the mean time, to have the copy of the revision sent to Venice, that no time might be lost, nor the publication protracted.

May 3. [X. 102.] Critical remarks.—Dreads the fatigue of altering.—Anxious to know if he thinks the privileges at Rome will be denied, and the loves in his poem condemned.—“Io,” says he, “non vorrei esser affaticatomi molti anni in vano.”—Wonders that Scipio should receive all his letters, of different dates, on the same day.—Puts him in mind of the privileges of Naples and Parma.—In another letter of the same date, Tasso expresses his anxiety about the *eighth* and *ninth* cantos, of the arrival of which at Rome he had got no intelligence, “mi noja il dubbio, che non siano state intercette, e mi si vanno avvolgendo mille pensieri fastidiosi per la testa.”—Criticisms.—Thinks that all his letters are first opened, and read before they reach Gonzaga, and that fortune persecutes him in every way. (See *Life*, &c. p. 221.)

May 14. [X. p. 105.] Criticisms.—Dissatisfied with the opinions of some of his revisors.—Sees no mode of making the proposed changes.

— 20. [X. p. 107.] Was employed in writing out the argument of the fable and episodes in prose, for the purpose of shewing at one glance the contexture of the whole poem, but, on account of an excessive headache, had been unable to finish it.—Criticisms.—Differs in opi-

No. XVII.

nion from his revisors.—Grateful to Gonzaga for writing out his *Jerusalem* with his own hand.

May 24. [X. p. 78.] To Luca Scalabrino. *—Informs him that he will transmit in a few days the *eleventh* and *twelfth* cantos.—Will send immediately the argument of the poem in prose, that the revisors may have a view of the scope of the whole.—Dissatisfaction at the criticisms of his revisors.

June 2. [X. p. 80.] To Luca Scalabrino.—Had read in the country the last canto of the *Jerusalem* to Alphonso, who seemed much pleased, and in a few days is to read the whole poem to him from the beginning.—Criticisms.—Dissatisfied with some critiques of his revisors. “Questo so bene, ch’io non sono più in tempo di mutare, ne muterò.”—Wishes to obtain a map of Jerusalem.—Is going with the duke to sup at Belriguardo.

—— 10. [IX. p. 318.] To Luca Scalabrino.—Anxious about the arrival of the revised cantos from Rome, as they had been very long on the way.

—— 11. [X. p. 108.] To Scipio Gonzaga.—Sends the *eleventh* and *twelfth* cantos.—Criticisms.—Still anxiously expecting the *strayed cantos*.—Has his foot in the carriage to go to Belriguardo.

—— 27. [X. p. 112.] From Bologna.—Mentions he had written him in haste when he left Ferrara, and it would seem he had then sent him the *thirteenth* canto, as, in this short letter, there are two criticisms on that canto.—Doubts the *strayed cantos* were now lost.

July 5. [X. p. 112.] From Ferrara.—Criticisms.—Changes he had made in his poem in compliance with a metaphysical objection of his revisors.—Has received the *strayed cantos* which had been copied for him by Scipio Gonzaga himself.

—— 16. [X. p. 252.] Excessive headaches and stupor, which had confined

* Scalabrino, by the good offices of Tasso, was now in the service of Scipio Gonzaga, and communicated to the poet the opinions of his revisors.

him two days to bed, and were now usual every year.—(See *Life*, No. XVII, &c. p. 223.) Had sent him two cantos, (perhaps the *fourteenth* and *fifteenth*.)—Begs him to take care that his cantos be not too much divulged, and to write him how they please persons of moderate learning.

July 20. [X. p. 116.] Had confided his intention of visiting Rome in October, to the Duchess of Urbino, who had advised him strongly against it.—(See *Life*, &c. p. 224.)

— 29. [X. p. 117.] Criticism.—Is quite exhausted with study, and would require a year's repose, and a pleasing journey, to recover himself.—Wishes to be informed of the arrival of the *sixteenth* and *seventeenth* cantos.

Sept. 2. [X. p. 119.] Changes to be made in his poem.—Has finished the transcription of the eighteenth, and next day is to begin the nineteenth canto.

— 17. [X. p. 120.] Answers some objections of his revisors.

Oct. 1. [X. p. 121.] Violent headache.—Critical reflections.—Is afraid that, on account of the marvels in his poem, and the strictness of the times, he will not obtain a privilege from Rome.—Yet that he must print, if not before, at least soon after Easter, in order to be delivered from misery and agony. (See *Life*, &c. p. 220.)—Of the compression of his style. (*Ibid.* p. 217.)

— 4. [X. p. 124.] Sends the *three last* cantos.—Had only lately an idea of writing an allegory.—Critical reflections. (X. p. 94.) See Appendix, No. XVIII.

— 15. [X. p. 86.] To Luca Scalabrino.—Critical reflections.—Has received the newly published commentary on the *Poetics* by Piccolomini.—Finds that he differs in opinion from himself, [Tasso] in thinking two principal, and, as it were, necessary heroes in a poem are improper, and that, therefore, according to him, the *design* of the *Jerusalem* must be bad.—Warmly opposes the doctrine of Piccolomini.

— 20. [X. p. 89] To Luca Scalabrino.—The plague in Venice.—A criticism suggested in his sleep. (See *Life*, &c. p. 226.)—Another critical letter to Luca Scalabrino follows the preceding one, but without date.

No. XVII.

Here closes the first revision of the *Jerusalem*. The critics seem to have been Scipio Gonzaga, Flamminio, Barga, and Luca Scalabrino. Already we see the impatience, suspense, anxiety, languor, and exhaustion of Tasso. The departure of our poet to Rome took place about the sixth of November, and his return to Ferrara happened about the middle of January, 1576. A new revision had commenced at Rome. Sperone and Antoniano, the first a metaphysician, the last a political bigot, and both of them jealous of Tasso's reputation, were now admitted into the number of the critics of the *Jerusalem*.

A. D. 1576.

- Jan. 24. [X. p. 127.] Wishes to know what state the revision is in, both with regard to poetic art and religious purity. The muse no longer inspires his labours.—Answers the objections about unity.—Anxious about the arrival of his cantos from Rome.—Intreats that care may be used that no copy of his poem be taken. (See *Life*, &c. p. 244.)
- Feb. 11. [X. p. 130.] Critical reflections.—Fears religious scruples, and will shew the verses blamed at Rome to an inquisitor then at Ferrara.—Is determined not to alter his poem materially, as objections may be made to the most perfect work.—Wishes, therefore, not to hear the barkings of every snarler against him. (*Life*, &c. p. 247.)
- 20. [X. p. 128.] Critical reflections.—Revived suspicion of the plague in Venice, which he fears will protract the publication of his *Jerusalem*. (*Life*, &c. p. 245.)
- March 1. [X. p. 131.] Has consulted an inquisitor, who made no objections; and will consult another about the passages blamed at Rome.—Critical reflections.—The plague in Venice; but at any rate the poem cannot be ready for publication by Easter. (*Life*, &c. p. 248.)
- 24. [X. p. 133.] Respecting his appointment to the charge of historiographer. [See *Life*, p. 251]—Mentions several causes of vexation.

March 30. [X. p. 147.] To Silvio Antoniano, (See *Life*, p. 262.)

April 3. [X. p. 134.] To Scipio Gonzaga.—Critical reflections, chiefly on verisimilitude.—Of the connection of episodes.—That of Olindo and Sophronia condemned.—Doubts in what manner its place is to be supplied; and, if by a narration of the taking of Antioch, the problem is determined, whether it is to be introduced so early in the poem.—On the same subject there is a letter to L. Scalabrino, at p. 85, without date, but written about this time.

— 14. [X. p. 140.] From Modena.—Will remove the word *Mago*—The songs and enchantments. (See *Life*, p. 274.)

— 24. [X. p. 141.] From Modena.—His letter to Silvio Antoniano has produced no effect.—He must mutilate his poem, and destroy the most beautiful passages, that he may obtain liberty to print it. (*Life*, p. 270.)—Great changes he is compelled to make.—Regrets his having shewed his poem in Rome.—Tells Scipio that Antoniano writes him, that he wishes the *Jerusalem* should be read, not so much by cavaliers, as by monks and nuns.

June 14. [X. p. 144.] From Ferrara.—Of the departure of Erminia.—Is changing a passage where Antoniano thinks he attributes too much power to love over the will. (*Life*, p. 280.)—On style.

— 15. [X. p. 109.] Letter with the allegory. [*Appendix*, No. XVIII.]

— 23. [X. p. 146.] Employed in making many vexatious changes and additions, [faticose e noiose mutazioni.]—Will remove all the enchantments, and whatever can offend the scrupulous.—Is extremely occupied.

July 15. [X. p. 114.] Great alterations to be made in the contexture of his poem.—Doubts.

This is the last letter preserved on the subject of the revision of the *Jerusalem Delivered*. About six weeks afterward, the quarrel happened with his treacherous friend, and the unhappy poet became a prey to that restlessness, and was disturbed by those vain fears and groundless apprehensions, which announce the approach of insanity.

No. XVIII.—P. 279.

OF THE ALLEGORICAL MEANING OF ROMANTIC POEMS.

No. XVIII. It has been observed in the text, that many of the *Romanzatori* pretend to a mystic sense concealed under the obvious import of their stories, a claim which seems to have been admitted by Milton. Spenser gave a still more unequivocal proof of his assent to this doctrine; since with him the principle did not remain idle, but produced the most unfortunate literary consequences. Thus it is of importance, that, on every subject, truth should be known; as, on every subject, the effects of error may be painful and pernicious.

“From Villoison, I learn,” says Cowper, (Hayley, iii. p. 202), “that it was the avowed opinion and persuasion of Callimachus, that Homer was very imperfectly understood * * that the poems of Homer were in fact an allegory; that, under the obvious import of his stories, lay concealed a mystic sense, sometimes philosophical, sometimes religious, sometimes moral, and that the generality either wanted penetration or industry, or had not been properly qualified by their studies to discover it. This I can readily believe, for I myself am an ignoramus on these points, and, except here and there, discern nothing more than the letter. But if Callimachus will tell me, that even of *that* I am ignorant, I hope soon, by two great volumes, to convince him of the contrary.”

This notion of a continued allegory concealed under the letter of Homer's poems has been demonstrated to be absurd by Terrasson, and seems to have been invented by the admirers of that poet, to shield him from the strong objections which many of the Pagans themselves made to his unworthy representations of the Deity. Plato, as we know, excluded the works of this great bard from his republic; and Pythagoras affirmed that Homer is cruelly tormented in hell, for his impious exhibitions of the Divinity. Both these writers were themselves much given to allegory, and seem to have had no idea of a mystical sense in this poet, or at least, if there was such an intention, that this was an excuse.

How indeed a latent and mysterious meaning can excuse what is openly obscene, or impious, it is not easy to see; even if we were to allow that a hidden signification was intended. This however was overlooked; on all sides it was agreed that an allegory is a sufficient apology for the grossest absurdity; and Tasso therefore (innocent as was his poem,) determined to cover himself with this shield from the arrows of bigotry. No poet makes a more open pretence than Tasso to a mystical meaning; the allegory of his poem composed by himself appears even in the most wretched editions of his *Jerusalem*, and if it be shewn that he had really no mysterious purpose, the argument will hold much stronger against those whose claims of this sort are more ambiguous.

"Doubting (says he, in a letter to S. Gonzaga, 4th Oct. 1575,) that the marvellous parts of my poem may appear unsuitable to the action, in which perhaps some good father of the German college shall desire more history and less poetry, I have judged that the marvellous may find pardon, and appear more suitable, if concealed under the veil of some good and holy allegory. For this reason, though I consider an allegory as by no means necessary in a poem, (being a thing, too, of which Aristotle in this strict sense says not a word,) and the business rather of a commentator than of a poet, I have taken some pains to introduce it. In short, I have given reason to suppose that it was a considerable object, though I say not like Dante,

Aguzza ben, lettor, quì gli occhi al vero,
Perocchè'l velo è quì tanto sottile,
Che dentro trapassarvi fia leggiere."

In the letter to the same illustrious friend, with which he accompanies the allegory, (and which is dated 15th June, 1576,) our poet thus expresses himself: "To confess the truth ingenuously to your lordship, when I began my poem, I had not the smallest idea of an allegory; both as it seemed to me a superfluous and vain labour, and as every interpreter creates an allegory according to his caprice: Nor have there ever been wanting to good poets, persons who furnish these in abundance, and of various kinds. . . . When I was past the middle of my poem, however, and began to meditate on the strictness of the age, it occurred to me, that an allegory might assist me in my difficulties. The idea, however, was still very indistinct, and it was only last week

NO. XVIII. that I formed it in the manner you shall see... If Proclus and other Platonists, and if Plutarch among the Peripatetics, defend Homer from his opponents only by means of allegory, why may not the same liberty be allowed to me, especially when joined with other and more firm defences..... I do not believe it to be necessary that the allegory should in every point correspond with the literal sense, since no such thing exists even among the Platonists, who are in this respect the most exact. In Homer and Virgil, it can be discerned only in some particular places, and Marsilius Ficinus *On the Banquet*, quotes with praise those words of St Augustine: "Non omnia quae in figuris finguntur, significare aliquid putanda sunt; multa enim propter illa, quae significant, ordinis et connexionis gratia adjuncta sunt. Solo vomere terra proscinditur, sed ut hoc fieri possit, caetera quoque huic aratri membra junguntur." If, therefore, the two cavaliers, [*those who go in search of Rinaldo I presume,*] should signify nothing, I do not think it is of much consequence. It would be better indeed that they could be made to have some signification; but I can at present invent nothing that will suit, and I beg that your lordship and Signior Flaminio will think of something for this purpose.*

The conclusion from these letters of Tasso is evident, that we are to give no ear to those who pretend to a mystic sense in Ariosto, Boiardo, and similar writers. This defence of allegory has been set up in favour of the illustrious Camöens, by the elegant translator of that poet. The bard of Portugal has made a strange mixture of Christian doctrine and Pagan mythology, has represented the Lusitanian heroes as protected by Venus, and persecuted by Bacchus. Mr Mickle first argues, that Camöens has an equal right with the ancients to adopt these personages: "Let our critic," says he, "be told that through the sides of Camöens, if his blow will avail, he has murdered both Homer and Virgil. What condemns the council of Jove in the *Lusiad*, [where Bacchus declares against the Portuguese on this account, that he having gained immortal glory as conqueror of India, this would be eclipsed, if the Indies should again be conquered by Gama,] condemns the councils of Jove in these models of the epopeia. What condemns Bacchus and the Moor, condemns

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 109-124.

the part of Juno in the Eneid, and every interposition of Juno and Neptune in Homer.”* Nothing surely can be more absurd than this. Homer employed the mythology of his own country, Camöens the mythology of a country not his own, and which is absurd and ludicrous when mingled with the objects of Christian faith. And certainly nothing can be more incongruous than that, when the propagation of Christianity is represented by the poet as the chief design of the Portuguese, Jupiter, Bacchus and Venus, should have the whole conduct and management of the voyage. No, XVIII.

Mr Mickle accordingly takes refuge in allegory, and a single specimen will suffice to shew the absurdity of this mode of interpretation, a mode so very foolish that even the great Bacon appears ridiculous while using it.† The specimen I shall take is Mr Mickle’s explanation of the amours of the Portuguese sailors with the Nereids, of which so much has already been said. “These wild phantastic amours, (says he,) signify in the allegory, the wild sects of different enthusiasts which spring up under the wings of the best and most rational institutions; and which, however contrary to each other, all agree in deriving their authority from the same source.”‡

No. XIX.—P. 287.

SONNETS OF TASSO AND OF GUARINI.

The following are the two sonnets alluded to in the text. In the first Tasso No, XIX. attacks Guarini; in the last this poet recriminates:—

Questi, ch’ ai cuori altrui cantando spira
 Fiamme d’Amore, e di pietate ardenti,
 E sì dolce risuona i suoi lamenti,
 Ch’ ogn’ odio placa, e raddolcisce ogn’ira:

* Vol. I. p. 313, 8vo. 1798.

† See his *Wisdom of the Ancients*.

‡ Vol. II. p. 313. The reader may find in Gibbon’s *History*, &c. vol. iv. p. 70, 8vo, an account of the shifts to which the Pagans were reduced in defending their religion from the attacks of the Christians, and how they endeavoured, by means of allegory, to soften and harmonize the deformed features of their mythology. See too Bryant’s *Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, vol. III. p. 104, 8vo.

No. XIX.

Chi'l crederia! si muove, e si raggira
 Instabil più, ch'arida fronde ai venti;
 Nulla fè, null'amor, falsi i tormenti
 Sono, e falso l'affetto, ond' ei sospira.
Insidioso Amante ama e disprezza
 Quasi in un punto, e trionfando spiega
 Di femminili spoglie empì trofei.
 Ma non consenta Amor, ch'alta bellezza,
 Ch' à suoi fidi seguaci in premio nega,
 Preda sia poi degl' infedeli e rei.

RECRIMINATION OF GUARINI.

Questi, che indarno ad alta meta aspira
 Con altrui biasmi, e con bugiardi accenti,
 Vedi, come in se stesso arruota i denti
 Mentre contra ragion meco s'adira.
 Già il suo veleno in lui ritorna e gira,
 E par che l'armi in se medesmo avventi;
 Già le menzogne sue quasi lucenti
 Christalli sono, ove si specchia, e mira.
 Di due fiamme si vanta, e stringe e spezza
 Più volte un nodo; e con quest'arti piega
 (Chi'l crederebbe!) a suo favore i Dei.
 Amor nò, che per alma a furti avvezza
 Sì bella Donna egli non scalda e lega,
 Premio de' fidi e casti affetti miei.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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